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REFLECTIONS
ON
MODERN WAR,
BY
THE FRENCH GENERAL LATRILLE;
TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL
BY
MAJOR HAVILLAND LE MESURIER,
SERVING ON THE GENERAL STAFF IN PORTUGAL.

A la Guerre l'Audace est presque toujours Prudence.

CHAPTER XIV.



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PREFATORY ESSAY.

THE following pages, which, during some weeks, formed the occupation of my leisure hours, are submitted to the British public, under a conviction that the system of warfare which they recommend is in perfect analogy with our national character, and that the maxims which they inculcate will be found not less applicable to our army than to that for which they were originally designed.

The work of General Latrille was first put into my hands, about four years since, at Kiel, in Holstein, by a general officer, at the head of a department in the Danish service. During the remainder of my stay on the Continent, and for some time after my return to this country, I fruitlessly endeavoured to obtain a copy, and I am indebted to a friend who was more fortunate for that of which I have made use. The work, I am assured, became scarce very shortly after its appearance, in the winter of 1801, nor can I conceive what prevented the publication of a second edition, which offered so fair a promise of a rapid sale.

On the opinions expressed and the maxims inculcated by the French General, abler judges will decide; but it must be admitted, that he states those

opinions with a precision and clearness highly creditable to him as a writer and a man. There are too many military works which seek rather to dazzle than to instruct the reader; others perplex the judgement by a multiplicity of examples, which offer various and even opposite inferences, and leave a doubt as to the sentiments of the author himself.

In his anxiety to recommend an offensive system of warfare, the author has been betrayed into a latitude of assertion which seems scarcely reconcilable with the good sense and discretion which characterize his remarks in general.

No people have derived greater advantage from the adoption of decisive measures, and a departure from the temporizing policy observed in former wars, than the French; yet, even they have found that

a retreat may be, under certain circumstances, not only expedient, but necessary; and that a war of feints and demonstrations requires superior talents in, perhaps, an equal degree with those splendid enterprizes which lead to the conquest of provinces and the overthrow of empires. Who is prepared to withhold from Fabius that praise to which his circumspection, in the opinion of his cotemporaries, so eminently entitled him?

Who has ever questioned the policy of the warfare carried on by Sertorius in Spain? Had Korsakoff avoided the fatal battle of Zurich, and effected his junction with Suwarrow, the iron crown of Lombardy would not, at this moment, encircle the brow of Bonaparte. It will surely not be contended, that the Russians, after the battle of Jena, in lieu of abandoning the country on the left bank,

of the Vistula and falling back on their reinforcements, should, with a dispirited and very inferior army, have marched to the encounter of the enemy. Happy would it have been for the allied cause if they had longer persisted in avoiding a decisive engagement; each day would have brought to their opponents an increase of difficulty and danger, by lengthening their line of operations and drawing them from countries, which, only imperfectly subjugated, were watching for an opportunity of asserting their independence. Nor should we forget that the time thus gained would have enabled Britain to transport and collect a powerful force on one side, while the fair promise of success might have brought the armies of Austria into the field on the other. The battle of Friedland dissipated these expectations, and put, on the degradation

of the Continent, a seal, which there is every reason to apprehend will not be soon broken. In general, where it is the wish of one army to bring on an action, it will become the aim of the other to avoid it; for, the interests of the contending parties are so opposite, that they can scarcely have an object in common, unless we suppose misconception or ignorance in one or other of the commanding generals.

General Latrille is perfectly devoid of the pedantry observable in most of the German military writers, who strive to conceal their want of ideas by an affectation of science and the introduction of technical phrases. Some of these gentlemen would have us believe that war may be learnt like chess, and that an attention to certain rules will, in either case, ensure success. M. de Bulow maintains,

that, when an army is advancing, the several corps, or columns, should be conducted, like radii, to a common centre, being the point of attack; from which, in a retreat, they must always diverge: and into these concentric and eccentric movements he resolves the whole art of war. Diagrams are produced, and the subject is handled in the manner of a problem in mathematics.

Did the earth present a uniform surface; were no such features in existence as mountains, woods, and rivers; or, at least, did these features always bear the same relation to each other; did the same facility of obtaining supplies every where exist; it is easy to imagine that a theory might be invented susceptible of universal application; but the duties of a general are so various, his attention must embrace such a multitude of subjects,

not alone the topography, nature, and resources, of the country in which the war is carried on, but the temper of its inhabitants and the disposition of the surrounding states: his success is so dependent on contingencies, over which he has, perhaps, no controul, that it appears impossible to lay down any settled rule for his conduct; or to subject to a fixed and uniform system elements so multiform and so variable. It is only by procuring good professional books, and by following, on correct maps, the progress of great generals, that the military student can possibly catch the emanations of genius, or collect knowledge, from which, in his future life, he may derive advantage. Though the situation of two armies, at distinct periods of time, can never be the same, they may, yet, be very similar; and the examples of Cæsar, of Hanni-

bal, or, with greater probability, of Frederick or of Bonaparte, may then determine a general as to the measures he should pursue.

Our author appears to have entertained this opinion ; his maxims, where general, are founded on an observation of the human heart, which is in its nature immutable ; and if he strongly, and it may be thought with too little limitation, inculcates the superior advantages of offensive warfare, he is actuated by a conviction that the ardour created by bold enterprizes will outweigh the advantages to be derived from position and topographical resources ; a conviction which his admirable analysis of Bonaparte's Italian campaigns is intended to illustrate and to justify.

Those of my readers, who may be disposed to controvert M. Latrille's observa-

tions on cavalry and artillery, may be reminded, that the battles of Alexandria and Maida were gained without a single mounted dragoon, in countries peculiarly favourable to that species of force ; and that the position before Corunna was maintained in all its integrity, under the fire of eight pieces of cannon, (according to the statement in the French bulletin,) admirably served and most commandingly posted, to which only four, and even those labouring under great disadvantages, could be opposed.

It is to be regretted, that in those parts of his work which treat of the training of soldiers, our author has not entered into a detail of the internal arrangements, and regimental economy prevailing in the French service. The greatest advantage must have accrued from a minute inspection of an edifice which, formed of

materials ill-assorted, opposite, and unpliant, is yet bound together, by the cement of discipline, into one firm and consistent mass,

We know, however, that in the French military code corporal punishments find no place ; and, as this honourable exemption is peculiar to that service, we may conclude, that discipline is maintained, in their regiments, by means to which other European nations are strangers ; by means, founded, perhaps, on a more liberal view of human nature than prevails elsewhere, and by calling into action the noblest passions of the human heart.

I have been assured, by emigrant officers, who professed to speak from experience, that the promulgation of the edict of Louis XVI. enforcing, for certain offences, the punishment of blows

with the flat of the sabre, occasioned the desertion of 30,000 men; so obnoxious to the French soldiery was what, in their estimation, tended to degrade their profession, and militated against that delicate sense of honour, by which they have ever wished to be considered as distinguished. The love of praise and dread of shame, into which this feeling may be resolved, has, however counteracted by other causes, ever rendered the French formidable to their opponents. May our rulers cherish a similar spirit in the British army; and, superior as we are in strength of body and intrepidity of character, our success can never become problematical.

Let it not be objected, that very little affinity exists in the character of the two nations; that measures which are perfectly well adapted to the government of

French soldiers would lose all their efficacy if applied to British. I contend, that this difference is owing rather to the systems respectively prevailing in the rival armies than to the diversity of national habits and opinions; and I am born out in this opinion, by considering, that the materials, of which the corps in the French service are composed, are discordant and heterogeneous in the extreme; that no army in Europe contains so large a proportion of foreigners; yet Poles, Italians, Dutch, Swiss, Germans, French, mingled without regard to nation or language, are governed by the same rules, and subjected to the same discipline; nor is the conduct of any such as to render necessary a departure from the general system. These foreigners, who are either forced into the ranks, or seek in them a refuge from captivity,

cannot be supposed to entertain much predilection for the cause in which they engage ; and it is clear, that the devotion, bravery, and enterprize, which they subsequently evince, must arise out of the nature of the service itself.

I am not ignorant, that imprisonment, and that too under very aggravated circumstances, is frequently resorted to in the French army : I will even concede, that the degree of suffering, in this case, may be greater than would arise from a severe flogging ; but the self-esteem of the soldier is not affected in the same degree ; privacy, while it adds to the severity, lessens the shame of punishment : this last may then become really efficacious in the prevention of crime, instead of laying, as at present, the foundation of future enormities. A soldier, whose back has been exposed at the triangle,

becomes indifferent to the good opinion of his officers and his comrades ; from that time he only considers whether the gratification arising from his irregularities be worth the bodily pain to which, in the event of the discovery, they will subject him.

The changes introduced into our military system, under the auspices of the illustrious personage lately at the head of the army ; the subjecting all courts martial to the sanction of an oath, administered as well to the members as to the witnesses, a measure by which the abuse of authority was effectually prevented ; the introduction of men from the militia ; perhaps the limitation in the term of service ; these, and other causes, have had a beneficial effect in the character of our soldiery ; but it may still be doubted whether, even now, corporal pu-

nishment could be safely expunged from the provisions of our military code: all objections, however, to that measure, would vanish, should the condition of the soldier be so improved, as to render it palpably preferable to that of the labouring classes; for, recruiting would then cease to be a work of difficulty, and, amid the crowds of volunteers which would flock to the standards of their country, such only be retained whose moral habits and bodily powers rendered them fit for the profession. Those who, after repeated trials, should evince a nature callous, to shame, and to be wrought upon only by the fear of punishment, might be transferred to colonial corps retaining the present discipline, and thus, in part, might be obviated the necessity of exposing our more valuable soldiery to the baneful effects of a tropical sun.

It may, perhaps, be asked, by what means I propose to improve the lot of the soldier? The question is replete with many and various considerations, which it would require much leisure to digest and a distinct treatise to unfold. I must not, however, be understood to recommend any addition to the present pay of the private, which is already fully adequate to his wants; on the contrary, a saving might accrue to the public from the measures to which I look forward, as they would materially add to the pecuniary resources of the soldiery.

The abandonment of the barrack-system, to which I apprehend many mischiefs may be traced, is perhaps not practicable, but, at least, it is highly susceptible of modification. Three parades each week might answer all the purposes of drill; at least, it is observable that

those soldiers who are attached to officers as servants, and who appear in the ranks still less often, are not more inexpert than their comrades, unless, indeed, as is sometimes the case, unfitness for their military duties has formed a ground for their selection. The men should be encouraged to labour in the trades, and avocations to which they were originally brought up, and employment procured for the remainder: thus might their industry be usefully employed in promoting the agriculture and manufactures of the country, when their courage was not required in its defence.

It would be proper to retain a proportion of the money thus earned by the soldier, which, at the expiration of his engagement, might enable him to quit the service with advantage; or, in the event of his being disabled, by furnishing

a seasonable addition to the allowance of government, secure his age from the pressure of penury and the horrors of want. One advantage, at least, would follow the adoption of these measures: by assimilating the pursuits of the man in civil and military life, the transition from one to the other would become almost imperceptible; and, if Providence should once more bless the nations of Europe with peace; should a reduction of our army become not incompatible with national security, the soldiers might be remanded to their homes in full confidence of their proving valuable subjects, and without any dread of that license, which the dispersion of a hundred thousand men, devoid of industry and unused to labour, could not fail to produce. •

Many of the irregularities committed by the troops, during the late retreat in

Spain, would possibly never have found place, if the men had been more accustomed to act independently; but the transition from the constraint of a barrack to the license always attendant on a line of march, especially a retreat, was so great, so sudden, that it called forth all the evil propensities of their nature, and hurried them into acts, from which, in their cooler moments, they would have shrunk. The guards were distinguished by the compactness of their column, their steadiness, and, more than all, by the resources they displayed under privation: recruited, as these troops in a great measure are, from the metropolis, and exposed to all its corruptions, their exemplary conduct, on this occasion, could only arise from the habit of depending on themselves and of profiting by the experience they had acquired in the walks of civil life.

It must be the object of every government to fit its troops for real service; indeed, discipline has no other view: and, if indulgence and a reasonable degree of liberty better conduce to this end than severity and restraint, policy and humanity concur in pointing out which line of conduct should be observed.

I have not withheld from my readers some notes pencilled in the margin of the original work by the late General Jarry, Commandant of the Royal Military College: they are interesting chiefly as they convey that veteran's opinion of the ideas of the author, being in themselves of too incidental a nature to afford much original matter.

It was originally my intention to insert maps of the seat of the operations on which the author animadverts, but I was

reminded that many of my readers would be already provided; and I the more readily abandoned the design, as the only maps within my attainment are to be found in every street of the metropolis.

The essay prefixed to the original has been suppressed, as I deemed it to be wholly irrelevant, and only intended to afford vent to the rancorous hostility which the author harbours against those, whom he terms, in the accredited phrase of the *Moniteur*, the tyrants of the seas. Neither have I inserted the collection of official reports contained in an appendix to the French work, as they are not essential to the text, as they would materially augment the bulk of this volume; and as, moreover, they have been inserted in all cotemporary magazines.

The leaven of national prejudice pervades the whole work ; and it is so closely interwoven with the text that it became impossible to suppress the one without injury to the other. It has been my study to present M. Latrille to my readers as he appeared to me ; though I do not presume to think that I can have rendered any portion of that lightness, elegance, and animation, which characterize his style, and would alone confer interest on his writings. As a translator, I am not responsible for the political tenets of my author ; and a British officer will surely not be suspected of coinciding in opinions, which, often derogatory to the character of his country, invariably represent her enemies as entitled to admiration and respect.

H. LE MESURIER.

London, March 25th.



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REFLECTIONS, &c.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE IMPORTANCE AND EFFECTS OF MILITARY EDUCATION.

HABIT and a robust constitution may enable the soldier to support the fatigues of war, but an enlightened system of discipline can alone preserve him from the seductions of peace: this maxim has however been seldom acted upon; and nations in general have, by inaction, lost that superiority which was founded in victories. Montesquieu observes, that the Romans owed their profound knowledge of the military art to the perpetuity of their wars: where these

are of short duration examples are often lost: peace gives rise to other ideas, and faults and virtues are alike forgotten.

All governments which have had in view great successes have commenced by accustoming their armies to fatigue. Philip, of Macedon, kept his troops always in motion: they were in the habit of marching three hundred stadia (about thirty-six English miles) each day. It was by these means that Philip rendered himself so formidable to Greece, and laid the foundation of the conquest of Asia by his son.

The French are naturally more warlike than were the Romans; yet the splendour of their arms has been displayed only at intervals: the cause of this difference can only lie in the military institutions of the two people.

The Spartans were so occupied during peace, that war was regarded by them as a season of recreation.* Among the Romans the effusion of blood constituted the sole difference between a field of battle and a field of exercise.† The legions remained constantly encamped on the

* Plut. in Lyc. v. i. p. 55.

† Joseph de Bello. Jud. 1. 3. cap. 6.

great rivers and frontiers of the empire.* Fortified places were considered to be the refuge of weakness. Their first rule of discipline was to keep the soldier always occupied, and certainly it was admirably adapted to preserve in vigour his mind and body. Twice every day the young soldiers were exercised, and the veterans repeated daily what they had learnt in their youth. The most rigorous winter scarcely interrupted these exercises; in which the soldier was taught to march, to run, to leap, to swim, to carry great burdens. In these imitations of war, the soldier's arms were twice as heavy as those used in real action. "They carry," writes Cicero, "provisions for fifteen days; every thing which they are in the habit of using; and their weapons do not incommode them more than their hands." It will be admitted, I imagine, that nothing less resembles this mode of forming soldiers, than that which we have adopted.

What correct ideas of war, indeed, could men, constantly cooped in towns, acquire, whose

* It has been remarked, that Constantine, in withdrawing the legions from the frontiers to the interior of the provinces, put the finishing stroke to their degeneracy.

most important occupations consisted in cleaning their clothes, polishing their arms, varnishing their appointments, and to whom two hours drill in the fine days of summer appeared insupportable fatigue? * An empty theory and punctilious attention to dress, and to some puerile forms of police; some smartness in the handling of arms; blows from the flat of the sabre; in these is comprised pretty nearly all that our ministers gleaned from the science of Frederick.

Let it not be imagined that I would blame cleanliness and regularity, in which the very essence of the military profession is comprised;

* M. de St. Germain fully felt the inconveniencies of the sedentary life led by troops; but this minister, who has been too much and too little praised, did not dare perform all he wished. The fifteenth Article of the Regulation of 1776 affords an example of the reserve with which he enjoins a little more activity. "It being the intention of his majesty that the troops be kept in a state of activity, which may tend to make and preserve them healthy and robust. He wills, that, *when the weather is not unfavourable*, those days which are not set apart for drills, shall be employed in military promenades, sometimes with arms and baggage, *sometimes without arms.*"

Could a physician, prescribing gentle exercise to a convalescent, be more circumspect?

but excess in every thing must be reprobated. The mania of dress had been the malady of the Prussians before it became our's; the father of Frederick, who had introduced it among his troops, obtained, in consequence, the ludicrous nickname of the Royal Sergeant. His son had not sooner ascended the throne than he hastened to arrest its progress. "Had peace lasted," observes the king in his Memoirs, "we should probably have got to paint and patches." Who would not believe that it was ourselves whom he was describing? Before the revolution, there was not an abbé about court, who put his hair in papers with greater care, or attended to his toilet with more exactness, than the generality of our elegant officers. It must be admitted, that matters could not well have been otherwise; when the government of a thoughtless people foment, instead of endeavouring to suppress, its characteristic levity, such absurdities must follow.

Government, I may be told, had its reasons for acting in this manner. Its object was more to guard against internal commotions than against invasions; these last, however, always follow the extinction of military spirit:* nu-

* Mont. Spirit of Laws, 10. c. 12.

merous armies will then dissolve as snow before the sun : fatigue and the inclemency of the air will destroy what the sword of the enemy has not mowed, or rather nothing will be left it to mow down ; for, let us be just, the French, however whelmed in luxury, have never ceased to be brave. They bear a warlike heart in the most debilitated frame ; and, with exact truth it has been asserted, that they were the only people whose courage would ever remain perfect and unaffected by the depravation of their moral character or civil habits. Unhappily, courage, though in itself indispensable, is not the only requisite in war ; health and strength are alike necessary to support its fatigues. The Romans passed from peace to war without any alteration in their mode of life : we are taken from a state of extreme idleness to one of extreme activity. Hence arise those innumerable maladies which sweep away modern armies with such frightful rapidity. The Romans quickly formed themselves to the burning sands of Africa, or to the frozen shores of the Danube. With the same legions Cæsar conquered Gaul, and overthrew the armies of Ptolomy and of Juba.

The legislator cannot then meditate too much on the measures best adapted to secure to the troops a better education ; those who remain

long engaged in actual war become excellent, and never has the French army been more fine, better disciplined, or more formidable, than after the long struggle which has just terminated. The deduction is self-evident; make it: as it were, continue the war in the bosom of peace, form encampments, and take from the general and the soldier every opportunity of forgetting the lessons of experience.

Peace has even an advantage over war, in that it affords more leisure and more means to correct the defects which may be discovered. The activity, tumult, confusion, inseparable from actual hostilities, do not always permit the chief to appreciate exactly the capacities of the inferior generals: a thousand circumstances escape his observations in the general bustle; so that, with charlatanism, management, and good fortune, a reputation is easily acquired: but here every thing would be maturely weighed and discussed in his presence; the end, the merit, and the inconveniences, of each movement would be explained. The opinion of each general would be required, with reference to the situation of the army, whether real or imagined. All the operations in use on actual service should be correctly performed. The generals would thus be enabled to retain the habit of

manœuvring large corps ; and the troops of the different services would learn to afford each other mutual assistance and support. All movements which should be found too complicated, too slow, too loose, might be amended and brought to perfection. All that are impracticable in war should be for ever abolished. Clouds of marksmen, behind which columns of considerable depth march in good order, should accustom themselves to the attack of redoubts at a brisk trot ; and to rally without confusion, in case of repulse. If these exercises were of no other use than to guarantee military men from the vices engendered by the extreme idleness of garrisons, and to strengthen their constitutions, those advantages are of themselves sufficient to call for the adoption of my ideas.

CHAPTER II.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE inconveniences attendant on the camps of exercise, proposed in the last chapter, would consist in the advantage they might afford to the formed and ready speaker, over men, who, endowed with merit, sometimes even with genius, yet express themselves with difficulty and in language not the most happy. It will be recollected, that, formerly, officers who had acquired brilliant reputations in the presence of the enemy, sank into insignificance at court, with the manners and idiom of which they were unacquainted.

This custom has, unhappily, not met with the fate of many others ; it yet subsists amongst us in full force. A man without other merit than the talent of arranging a few phrases, and

even those not his own, becomes the oracle of an assembly, while veterans, who by their actions have prevented Russian or German from being the language of Paris at this day, are scarcely deemed worthy of listening to his harangues: it is well known, that, for the last fifty years, every man in France has been anxious to be esteemed a wit; this is one of the consequences of the mania. Wit and erudition are, doubtless, estimable, and I shall have occasion to repeat that opinion at greater length; but solid distinction is only to be acquired by vigour of character,

As to the objection in question; it may be removed, methinks, by an expedient at once simple and of easy application: in lieu of deliberating on measures before their execution, let us discuss their merits afterwards. The man, who might point out how Cæsar or Hannibal would have acted in a given situation, should not be preferred to him, who, under similar circumstances, would adopt similar measures, even though this last should be unable to cite authorities. Peace is a season of pleasure and intrigue; and, under its shadow, many who have not born the labours of war advance their views, and often establish their fortunes. My plan to other advantages would add that of

impeding the success of these men. Had it existed in the time of Louis XIV. I imagine that Turenne would have made a less sorry figure at court.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHAT MANNER THE TRAINING OF THE
TROOPS HAS AN INFLUENCE ON MILITARY
OPERATIONS.

THE difference which we have pointed out in the training of antient and modern armies could not but have a sensible influence on the operations of war. Those brilliant and rapid invasions, which distinguish the annals of antiquity, were no more to be found. Whole campaigns passed in reciprocal demonstrations. With a battle or two, and the capture of a few places, every thing ended; the troops went into winter-quarters, and the generals hastened to court, to intrigue for rewards and for applause. After some years of this idle and cruel sport, peace brought back each power to its original boundaries, with the regret of having

exhausted itself, reciprocally with its antagonist. The wars, in particular, which France carried on during the two last reigns, scarcely merited that name; and posterity will not readily believe that the country of Charlemagne, Duguesclin, Crillon, Condé, Turenne, contained at that disgraceful epoch not one man to whom the sovereign dared to confide the command of his armies. The desire of possessing the empire of the fashions then formed our sole ambition; and, while we were inundating the north of Europe with the wares of our milliners and trinket-makers, we were receiving from it generals to conduct our wars.*

The most warlike and most brave people in the world was in this respect behind every other; and we had lost the very principles of an art which was making the most rapid progress around us. Hence those words, which, from the very beginning of the campaigns of the revolution, were in every body's mouth; *war is not carried on as it was formerly*. Yet more

* Marshal Saxe was incontestibly a man of high professional merit, and it is not to him that the indecision of a cabinet, void of energy, should be attributed: — He and Marshal de Lowendal were foreigners.

was said, and the generals were accused of conquering against rule, while they had only raised themselves to a level with the times, and reverted to the true principles of the art.

War has but two objects in view, attack and defence:—indeed these two objects may be reduced into one; for he who attacks may be attacked, and often the best method of resisting an attack is to become the assailant. Tactics must be modified with reference to time, place, the description and character of the troops employed on either side, but the leading maxims of the art of war remain invariably the same. These maxims require an adoption of whatever tends to abridge the duration of war, and to render it less sanguinary. That is precisely what we have effected.* Having said thus much, it will be readily conceived, that I do not approve the mania which many military writers, in other respects highly estimable, have had, of classing the several modes of conducting war under general denominations, which

* I am aware that this assertion is at variance with the opinion commonly entertained, that we have vanquished only by being lavish of blood. I entreat the reader to pause before he decides.

are almost invariably inaccurate. This rage of reducing every thing to system was the foible of the last century; it gives to writings of all descriptions a dogmatical and authoritative tone, which has ever appeared to me to be revolting; and I am free to confess that I have never rightly understood what was meant by those high sounding terms, war of position, war of chicane, oblique order, &c.* the least inconvenience, arising from their adoption, was, that authors found themselves obliged to alter and qualify facts in the manner best adapted to elucidate and confirm their brilliant theories. Thus was the understanding of the reader misled, and thus was the state of ignorance in which we were plunged continued and confirmed.

These systems formed in the cabinet could not be reduced to practice. Military men, imbued with these false principles, and called by their rank in life to the command of armies, betrayed by their embarrassment the defects and vices of their education. Timid, when believing them-

* Yet the author, in another place, presents us with a very satisfactory definition of the last expression here enumerated. Note by the late General Jarry.

selves to be only methodical, they lost the most precious moments in empty and indecisive demonstrations, or preserved an imposing inactivity. Hence arose the opinion, for some time so universally accredited, that no people in Europe could again act the part of conquerors; an opinion which the victories of Frederick shook, and which that prince would have completely overthrown, if his means had been commensurate with his genius and his ambition.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE REVOLUTIONS IN THE ART OF WAR,
FROM THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

MARSHAL Saxe struck out a grand idea, when he predicted, that the great secret of battles would one day be found to consist in a combination of rapidity and order. This profound conception subsequently fermented in the thinking head of Frederick, and he discovered the principles on which the tacticians of antiquity had acted. But how had they been lost? What causes had conspired to give to tactics so timid a character, or rather to annihilate tactics altogether? How had those multitudes, which history depicts to us as flexible, rapid, conforming to all sorts of ground and

dispositions, become heavy, inert, and difficult to manage? This question would require profound investigation; my limits confine me to a rapid sketch.

The Romans perfected the art of war which the Greeks had created; but this people, which had conquered the universe by the superiority of its infantry, abandoning the system of its ancestors as it had already forgotten their virtues, multiplied the cavalry in an excessive degree, and placed its whole confidence in that description of force and in warlike engines, certain indications of a want of courage and of the decline of the art. The irruptions of the barbarians completed what corruption and effeminacy had begun. These people, however, being all warlike, it is reasonable to suppose that the art would quickly have recovered itself, had not various causes united to defer the period of its restoration.

After the armed colonies, disgorged by the north, had so ravaged the south of Europe that it no longer afforded aliment to their rapacity, they were compelled to settle in the devastated countries, dividing among themselves the soil and its inhabitants. The vanquished became serfs, or villains, and the possessors of fiefs were alone considered to be freemen. Such was

the origin of what we have called the feudal system, and of nobility. Pride quickly found its way to the hearts of these rude lords, whom rapacity and hunger alone had attracted to our genial skies. They became corrupted amid the sweets of uncontested dominion. On foot, they had achieved the conquest of the Roman world, but soon disdained to walk as the rest of mankind; walking* was considered to be derogatory to the character of a nobleman, and pretenders to high blood were in future to be seen, in the field, not otherwise than mounted. They only carried on war; and, if they caused themselves to be accompanied by their slaves, it was at the utmost only from motives of ostentation. Thus the whole strength of armies once more consisted in cavalry, which, by way of excellence, was called *the battle*; while the infantry, a vile assemblage without character, without order, without discipline, and almost without arms, sank into the utmost contempt.

* It is curious to trace, in history, how invariably like causes produce like effects. Amongst the Parthians, freemen rode, slaves walked. The Mamelukes have established the same distinction.

Sovereigns having at their disposal no other troops than those which were furnished by their vassals, under the obligations of military tenure, and even these troops being liable to serve only for a determinate and often very limited time, it became impossible to enforce a regular system, and the art of war, in consequence, made not the slightest progress.

Military operations were confined to rapid incursions, alike destitute of aim and vigour, a state of things which lasted throughout some centuries. Charles VII. was the first, who, to render himself independent of the great vassals of the crown, took a body of regular troops into his pay.* This innovation, which was a great step towards perfection, and rendered possible the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII.

* This remarkable event took place about the middle of the fifteenth century. Charles the VII. after having driven out the English, pretended to fear new attempts on the part of these eternal enemies of France. By means of the apprehensions which he thus created, he obtained supplies for the payment of the troops which he had preserved. The aim of this monarch was the humiliation of his nobles. Louis XI. his son, pursued the same object, and it is well known by what horrible measures he succeeded in realizing it.

opened the eyes of all the princes of Europe, who adopted, without delay, a system so well adapted to augment their power.

But the use of a well-appointed infantry had not yet been imagined; this revolution was the work of the Swiss. This people, whose nobility was neither rich nor numerous, was, to free itself from the yoke of the house of Austria, obliged to devote its whole attention to the formation of a good infantry, capable of resisting and engaging cavalry: its offensive arms consisted in long halberts and heavy swords; the defensive in cuirasses and helmets. Experience soon taught the Swiss tactics analogous to their new troops. Their habitual order of formation was a square, which on all sides presented to the enemy a rampart of pikes. The utmost efforts of the German cavalry, those not less formidable of the Gendarmerie of Burgundy, could not succeed in breaking these formidable masses. They soon played a distinguished part in the wars of Italy, and they overthrew whatever ventured to oppose them.

These events opened the eyes of the sovereigns of Europe, each became anxious to have Swiss in his pay, but the insolence and the

avarice* of these auxiliaries accelerated the creation of a good national infantry, as the only means of superceding the necessity of their services.

The Germans, who are docile, patient, and at the same time strong and courageous, were readily moulded to the discipline of their neighbours. The impetuous character of the French was with difficulty brought to support this change, and, indeed, the aversion was never wholly overcome. The Spaniards, more phlegmatic, more attached to order, adopted the new system without difficulty, and by their improvements in a manner rendered it their own. By those means did they acquire a superiority which they maintained nearly one hundred and fifty years, and which they lost from political causes, which are unconnected with my subject.

* They on several occasions abandoned Francis I. under pretext that they were not regularly paid. Hence the proverb, "without money, without Swiss."

CHAPTER V.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. — EFFECTS OF
THE INVENTION OF GUNPOWDER.

THUS, then, after having been so long misunderstood, the military art was about to assume a new character, when the invention of gunpowder at once arrested its progress.

The astonishment which this discovery excited, caused mankind to lose sight of all former notions. The use of fire-arms rapidly spread. It requires that the soldier should be steady and halted; hence the science of movement was neglected and disappeared. It was perceived, that, the greater the mass exposed to the action of cannon or musketry was, the more deadly were their effects. * Formations on many ranks

* I do not remember to have seen in English military writers expressions exactly corresponding to the French "*ordre*

were, in consequence, abandoned; it was imagined, that troops ought to march in the order in which it was intended they should fight; and, as troops in action were formed three deep, they were made to march and manœuvre without changing that disposition. It is easy to conceive how extremely slow the movements of bodies, at all numerous, must have been; * and, it is impossible to believe, that, lengthened out as their files must necessarily have been, in a march to either flank, they could have offered the least resistance to the impulse of an active and manœuvring body. It is difficult to

profond, ordre mince." The first relates to a corps, whose original formation in line is on *more* than three ranks; the second to a corps formed in the manner at present in use, on two or three ranks; or two or three deep as it is termed.

That is to say, the corps marched in line, when its movements were to the front, if the ground was favourable; otherwise in file, by facing to one of its flanks: in which order it must always have taken ground to its right or left. — TRANSLATOR.

* All military men know that it is, in all cases, extremely difficult to preserve distances in a march to a flank; and that a column, which has been some time in march, will, when halted and wheeled up into line, generally present immense intervals between the divisions.

conceive how the inconveniences of such a practice could have escaped the observation of thinking men: but history presents us with long periods of time, in which the human understanding appears to have slept; and where the universality of error ensured its duration. The same faults being committed by all, the latent mischief with which they were pregnant was not perceived; and it was deemed impossible to invent any better system than that which was in general use. No people ventured to act otherwise than their neighbours. Armies gave their whole confidence to the newly-invented weapon; * their principal strength was deemed to consist in artillery; man became only an accessory; personal bravery lost its eclat, and almost its use; and the unfortunate facility with which princes were enabled to multiply these armed machines, which made soldiers without making warriors, completed the annihilation of every principle of genuine tactics.

* A few sound heads were preserved from this enthusiasm. Let us hear Montaigne, "But as to this arm, I think, that, saving the shock which it produces in the ear, to which every one becomes at length accustomed, it is not an arm of much effect; and I hope that we shall one day discontinue it."

Some branches of the art, the construction, attack, and defence, of fortified places, for instance, made considerable progress in the reign of Louis XIV. Artillery became somewhat less embarrassing; but the science of evolution and of great movements remained in a state of infancy, as must be admitted on a candid consideration of the most celebrated battles of that age: armies, often in order of battle from the preceding evening, scarcely ever fairly closing,* and not advancing, the one or the other, until after a heavy fire of artillery and musketry during several hours. This butchery lasted to the extinction of the contending armies, or until one, less obstinate or less patient, fell back when the other advanced; a charge of cavalry sufficed to decide the victory, and all was finished. Not only were wars, at the epoch of which we are speaking, extremely bloody, but they were also very indecisive; because, every thing that tends to impede the movements of an army renders it less capable of deriving profit from

* To vanquish an enemy decisively it is necessary to close with him: the action will be deadly and doubtful in proportion as the movements made are slow. War is at present less destructive than it was formerly, owing to the increased rapidity introduced into military evolutions.

its successes. After an affair of a serious complexion, it became necessary to make new preparations, and to wait until a numerous artillery, with its long train of concomitants, was in a state to follow the troops.

It cannot be denied that Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, drew the greatest possible advantage from a system so intrinsically vitious; but, as Guibert has judiciously observed, they added but little to the art of war, and owed their successes wholly to talent and a military eye: they were great generals, but less from study than from intuition.

Europe owes to Louis XIV. the use of uniforms, but she also owes to him that excessive multiplication of troops which weighs upon and devours her.* Nevertheless, the minds of men were becoming enlightened; it was felt that there must exist a radical vice, but no person had yet pointed out a remedy. The

* Every sovereign keeps on foot armies as large as he could maintain if his people were in danger of extermination; and this state of effort, of all against all, is called peace. It is true that these efforts contribute to the maintenance of the balance of power, as they keep the great powers in a state of exhaustion. — Mont. Sp. of Laws.

perusal of the antients had only suggested systems incompatible with the arms now in use. Folard wanted to bring us back exclusively to formations in deep order; led away by his enthusiasm for the antients, he preferred their enormous wooden towers and their balistæ to our artillery. Puissegur proposed the wedge and circular formations; Marshal Saxe, who united a spirit of observation to brilliant talents, saw the evil in all its extent; but he had only the glory of foreseeing a revolution which was to be the work of genius.

Frederick appeared, and created an art entirely new; let us hear his eloquent panegyrist: "He discovered in the doublings of the Grecian phalanx the elements of deployments: Pyrrhus had established them amongst his troops: Gustavus, and after him Charles XII. had had imperfect ideas on the subject. Frederick perfected and introduced them in his infantry, and afterwards in his cavalry. The inconveniences attendant on our long columns of march, and the proportionate slowness with which they were formed in order of battle, were thus diminished. Hence he became enabled to act with greater decision, and to mask his dispositions until the very moment of acting, and that he had arrived within reach of his enemy.

The individual movements of a column being rendered more complete and more rapid, it became Frederick's next care to make several columns act with concert and relation to each other. He accustomed them exactly to preserve their distances; to move, over equal spaces or unequal spaces, without losing sight of the conformity necessary to be observed by parts of the same whole; to traverse stated distances in a stated time; to form in all directions, whether parallel or oblique; whether in entire or in part; whether to compose, or merely with a view to support, the corps of attack, &c."

As soon as Frederick had established harmony in the different evolutions of his army, he entered on his career with the strides of a giant. The rapidity of his marches, the boldness and precision of his manœuvres, became, by turns, the admiration of Europe: it was astonished to behold a state, which half a century before had scarcely been considered as having an influence on the general balance of power,* acquire, in a

* "When the elector of Brandenburg declared war against Louis XIV. it was, observes Frederick in his *Memoirs*, "for Louis XIV. one enemy more, but Louis XIV. did not perceive it."

few years, a degree of weight which placed it in the first rank of nations. Frederick did not, like Cæsar, direct all the power of the conquerors of the civilized world against Barbarians enfeebled by intestine divisions. He had not, like Alexander, Asiatics sunk in luxury to subjugate. He contended against the finest and most warlike soldiery which Europe at that time possessed. Six powers, every one of which possessed means equal to the totality at his disposal, eagerly endeavoured to effect his ruin, and he came out of the unequal contest triumphant.* Who will now deny the influence of genius, or condemn the science which confers and saves empires?

* These powers were France, Austria, Russia, the King of Poland, the empire of Germany, and Sweden. "What would the great elector say," writes Frederick to Voltaire, "if he saw his grandson engaged with so many enemies. I do not know whether there will be for me any shame in being defeated, but I am sure there can be for them no great glory in defeating me."

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE PREJUDICES WHICH CAUSED LITERATURE TO BE CONSIDERED AS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE MILITARY PROFESSION.

AMONGST the causes, which most contributed to retard the progress of the art of war, should be enumerated that barbarous prejudice which caused the cultivation of letters to be regarded with profound contempt, and required in a gentleman no other accomplishments than those of riding and handling a lance with grace and dexterity at a tournament. The omission would be the more inexcusable, as even in this age the prejudice is not wholly done away. It required brilliant valour and the majesty of the throne on the part of Francis I. to reconcile his cotemporaries to the taste which that prince indulged for literature; and military men are

still to be found, who cordially wish that Frederick had never made verses, nor written the *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburg*. They regret that Cæsar composed *Commentaries*; Xenophon, Marcus Aurelius, Julian, excellent books; and, what is yet worse, Scipio, comedies. They are at a loss to conceive, how Sully, after having fought in a most exemplary manner for his Sovereign, should have managed his finances with yet more striking ability. Coligny, the Guises, the great Condé, are in vain adduced to prove that wit and erudition are not incompatible with military pursuits. They profess to undervalue those of their comrades, who devote to study that time which they themselves pass in gambling, with women, or in idleness.

I will admit that Attila, Tamerlane, Koulikhan, were conquerors of the first note, without having studied Polybius or Vegetius; but the history of these great men itself affords an additional proof, that mere unenlightened genius will ever raise an edifice more striking than durable.

Incapable of connecting their vast conquests by a proper system of legislation, they erected but a transient power, which expired with themselves. The grand son of Pepin, superior as he

was to the men I have enumerated, failed in transmitting his empire to his children. Such a masterpiece of politics and of wisdom, as would have been necessary to ensure this object, could not have been matured amid the profound darkness in which the world was plunged at the æra of Charlemaign. Every thing has its season.

If the arms of the Romans were attended by prodigious and constant successes, they owed them more to the wisdom of their policy than to the splendour of their victories: they did not conquer the world with the same rapidity as Alexander; but, so to speak, foot by foot, and in the lapse of several centuries. War itself was for them a long apprenticeship; they began it as robbers, and they ended by inventing the formation and tactics of the legion, very superior to those of the Grecian phalanx.* Their pro-

* This assertion has appeared rash to some of those military men whom I have consulted on this work. I could give the reader a sketch of the tactics of the Greeks and Macedonians, and of those of the Romans, to enable him to pronounce on the subject; but, as the nature of this work is incompatible with such details, I shall content myself with pointing out the source from which they may be drawn: Guichard's *Military Memoirs*.

ficiency in the arts of encampment and of conducting sieges could only have been the fruit of an enlightened experience. The Romans had the advantage of being enlightened for a considerable time before they became corrupted. And how could men be otherwise than enlightened, who were educated in the various duties of society, and alternately filled offices, which, in the opinion of the present day, are wholly incompatible? * The edileship, the prætorship, the priesthood, the questorship, the consulship; in other words, police, civil administration, justice, war, religion, politics; successively became among the Romans objects of the study of a public man. With us, on the contrary, a soldier is only a soldier, a judge only a judge, and a financier only a money-

* Let it not be said that every man will best discharge the duties of his profession when he knows that he never can have the option of quitting it: I assert that this will be the case, when a man, by distinguishing himself in his present, looks forward to eminence in another, situation. — *Mont. Spirit of Laws*, book 20, chap. xxii.

Solon, sprung from royal ancestry, was successively an able merchant, good poet, and great legislator. Mahomet, who is commonly regarded in the light of an ignorant enthusiast, trod in the steps of the Athenian sage, and was, in addition, a great warrior.

broker: we have divided amongst ourselves the weight of a world which a single Hercules formerly supported; and, as if our solicitude had not lost sight of ignorance and idleness themselves, we have established convents; as if to enable those, who are fit for no other purpose, to live and fatten on their very uselessness.

If the men of our days would reflect on the time they lavish on the most empty trifles; on that portion which they pass in ennui, in dissipation, in what are called the duties of society; they would cease to wonder at the lives of the antients. "What time," said Philip of Macedon to Dionysius of Syracuse, "did your father employ in composing all the works which he has left us?" "The time which you and I pass in drinking," was the dethroned tyrant's reply. And that is precisely the answer to be returned to those shallow-brained men, whose jealousy is sensibly alive to whatever is above the reach of their contracted capacities, and, in consequence, humbles their self-love.

CHAPTER VII.

HOW WAR IS BECOME MORE DIFFICULT AND
MORE RUINOUS THAN IT WAS FORMERLY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the improvements which Frederick has introduced into the art, war is infinitely more difficult and more burdensome than it was formerly: both effects flow from the same cause; the prodigious increase in the number of the troops employed.

Small armies, formed in close columns, and occupying consequently but small spaces, were easily commanded by a single man. The whole action passed under his eye, he was enabled to observe all its details, he overlooked the whole field, and he could give to his manœuvres a degree of precision and rapidity which parried or provided against ulterior contingencies. But,

with armies of more than one hundred thousand combatants, acting on lines of several leagues in extent, the case is very different.* To penetrate into a province, to execute a great movement, it is necessary to divide an army into several corps; to weigh the nature of the obstacles which each of these great fractions may encounter; and, maugre local difficulties and the disparity of distances, so to combine † their several movements as to make them act simultaneously to the same end. Even after the

* The line of the army of the Rhine, at one time, extended from Basle to Dusseldorf, and even to Nimeguen.*

* General Jarry observed on the above note, "The line in question was the *line of defence*, not the *line of battle*." This is a distinction to which the military tyro will do well to attend: the one is the line of an army, or corps of army, formed in order of battle, and seldom exceeds three or four English miles in length; the other marks the boundary of the country which it is particularly wished to secure from the attempts of the enemy, and may be of thirty times that extent. They are so far connected as that the position of the line of battle is chosen with a view to the general security of the line of defence. The 24th chapter of this work cannot fail to put this subject in its true point of view. — TRANSLATOR.

† A want of due combination in the marches of their columns occasioned to the allies the loss of the battle of Austerlitz. The victory was decided before the two columns on the left of the combined army had been seriously engaged. — See Stutterheim's Account of the Battle of Austerlitz, translated by Major (now Lieut.-Colonel) Coffin. — TRANSLATOR.

most perfect accord has been established between all the parts of this vast machine, it will be still required to have in reserve means which may repair the effects of whatever disorder or misunderstanding takes place in the execution of the original plan; the harmony of which a topographical error, an unforeseen difficulty, the incapacity or the negligence of a lieutenant, may alike disturb.

The sole remedy for so many inconveniences, is, it appears to me, to contract as much as possible the line of operations; to make the great efforts at a point where the bulk of the army is assembled; to employ, at a distance from it, only secondary means; which though calculated to improve success, can under no circumstances occasion defeat, nor even the miscarriage of the principal project; in a word, always to reserve a part of your army, to be enabled to act more efficaciously with the remainder. Such was the uniform practice of Frederick in his last campaign, and to that disposition has been given the appellation of oblique order.*

* Epaminondas practised this manœuvre at the battle of Leuctra. M. de Guibert observes, that his forces at this battle

The conformation of modern armies does not the less require the most transcendant talents on the part of the generals ; for, though Frederick may be equalled in orders of battle, it may be found impossible to supply the place of that military eye, that impulse of the moment, which Nature alone bestows, and of which she

did not exceed six thousand men ; and that it required far greater talents on the part of Frederick to apply the principle to our large armies. M. de Guibert is right ; but he should have added, that, what Epaminondas effected at Leuctra with six thousand men, he did at Mantinea with thirty thousand.

Machiavel, long before Guibert, had perfectly characterised this order of battle ; he even explains the means which were employed to counteract it.

“ When the enemy drew his chief force to one of the wings of his army, almost all the great captains of antiquity laid it down, as an invariable rule, to cause a counter-manceuvre to be executed, which was well adapted to frustrate his designs. They did not reinforce the point threatened ; but, by a rapid movement, carried the bulk of their troops to the opposite side. The result was, that the enemy, meeting with little resistance in a point where orders had been given to yield ground, abandoned himself to the pursuit with the more confidence, as he attributed his success to the effect of his manœuvre ; but soon he discovered himself to be enveloped by the principal wing of his adversary, which, throwing disorder and dismay into his ranks, ravished from him that victory which he considered himself already to have obtained.” — Machiavelle dell' *Arte di Guerra*, lib. 4, cap. i.

is so avaricious. Genius is not to be copied; and imitation has never yet produced any thing grand. Profit by the lessons of a master, but do not servilely conform to them. Had Raphaël always been contented to copy Perrugino, he would never have surpassed him. Weigh maturely times, places, circumstances, and abandon yourself to the suggestions of your genius, if you have genius; if you have not, abandon all idea of commanding an army.

CHAPTER VIII.

AN OBSERVATION.

ALL generals are not kings and legislators like Frederick; they are often alike deprived of power and opportunity to form their armies, and to prepare them for the execution of their designs: they are compelled to put in action the means confided to their care, without the liberty to choose or the leisure to perfect them. Hence, it was only in Prussia, that an army existed, of which the component parts were perfectly in unison, and the whole life of a great man was scarcely sufficient to complete this important work. Every where else there existed a blind routine, an observance of some rules more of minutiae than of

real utility, and an imitation more or less exact of the external forms of the Prussian discipline.

CHAPTER IX.

OF GENERALS AND THEIR CHARACTERS.

THE beginning of the last war afforded many instances of the bad effects arising from the vitious system of our military education. We had preserved little more than a few traditionary notions, on a profession with which it was become more than ever necessary that we should be well acquainted. It was imagined that numbers might be made to supply the place of every other requisite, but confusion and difficulties were hence but the more augmented. The war of the revolution has been for us a real school: the beginning was a tissue of blunders; the middle partook of good and evil; the termination has proved us to be superior to our masters.

The frequent change in our generals has alternately brought forward men of every character: those who possessed genius have directed, with hardihood, masses whose numbers astonish the imagination. They have been beheld rapidly directing their principal efforts from right to left, without fear of discovering an unguarded point; or, by holding out a specious lure, attracting the enemy to the very points on which they were desirous of meeting him. Not less able in planning than prompt in executing, they left to their adversaries no time to detect, nor means to excite, obstacles to their gigantic designs. Generals of this description have been rare. Others, and in greater number, intimidated by the insufficiency of their means, were, in a manner, weighed down by the complication of the immense machine over which they presided. Absorbed in details, ever unquiet, trembling, irresolute, and too much occupied in endeavouring to read the intentions of the enemy to hazard the slightest enterprise. Possessed of no other talent than that of varnishing their inaction with a thousand plausible pretexts, their attention was directed to discover the weak side of whatever plan was presented to them, with a view to be dispensed from its execution, and to acquire, at the same

time, a high reputation for prudence. The difficulty of subsisting, of clothing, of paying their numerous armies,* were the points on which generals of this stamp chiefly insisted, not aware that inaction hourly aggravated and increased those evils. There was but one way of putting a period to them; by overrunning the rich provinces of the enemy, and, according to the maxim of the ancients, "to make the war feed the war."†

The government, impatient at their delays, sometimes forced them to act: they put themselves in motion indeed, but in a manner alike devoid of decision and true skill. They every where offered a hold to the enemy, by giving to their front always the same extent, and, in consequence, leaving it in an equal state of weak-

* These were the motives alleged by Scherer for declining to invade Italy. In the first instance he demanded troops, then shoes, then horses, then tents, then battering artillery. The directory lost patience, and recalled him; a circumstance to which France, doubtless, owes the termination of her misfortunes.

† Alexander undertook the conquest of Asia with only two hundred talents, (twenty-five thousand pounds sterling,) in his military chest, and one month's provisions in his magazines.

ness. If the general on the opposite side was at all active or intelligent, he was enabled to divine their intentions from the first movements; he knew what position they would take after quitting the one they occupied. Men of this stamp in all things affect a mysterious silence, they keep their intentions profoundly secret, and yet they are always foreseen and anticipated. Nothing is more easy than to discover the designs of these circumspect commanders, unless it be to blind them as to those entertained by their opponents; not that they are deficient in vigilance, on the contrary, the most admirable order reigns among their troops. Their precautions for the security of their camp are perfect; the site of this last excellent; but, notwithstanding, if they are opposed by a man skilled in the science of marching, they will be almost invariably surprised.*

* I do not allude to the surprise of a post, a convoy, or a detachment, events which have little influence on the fate of war. I say that he is surprised who allows himself to be misled by the feints of an enemy; an example will make me fully understood. General ——— commanded on the Rhine a corps of twenty thousand men, who were kept in check, for more than three months, by about two thousand light cavalry, which the Archduke Charles had thrown on the other bank of

The enemy will fatigue their attention by constant manœuvres, and fall with superior forces on one wing while they are occupied in strengthening the other. If they find in their adversary a man of a character similar to their own, the war becomes the image of a chess-board; the two champions seek and avoid each other alternately, advance and retreat with such order and symmetry that the war may last for years without producing a decisive action. Observers admire notwithstanding, shout applauses, and decree the surname of Fabius to him who perhaps least resembles that great commander.

the river, while he made head against a stronger force in another quarter. General ——— was surprised.

CHAPTER X.

HOW THE NAMES OF FABIVS AND XENOPHON
ARE USED TO SCREEN COMMANDERS OF IN-
FERIOR TALENTS.

THE number of commanders is inconceivable who have owed their reputations to the resemblance which some panygerists have found, or feigned to find, between their conduct and that of Fabius or Xenophon. If an example from antiquity can be in any manner introduced, a question at once assumes a new aspect; the ignorant do not examine its relevancy, and the doctrine connected with it travels uncontradicted to posterity.

To compare a general to Fabius with any justice, it would be necessary to shew that his adversary possessed the talents of Hannibal;

for, as we have had occasion to observe in the last chapter, it will be not difficult for two men of ordinary capacities to acquire reciprocally high reputations, by preserving in their operations an air of symmetrical method, which ever catches superficial observers.

When, under Francis the first, the Constable Montmoreney, by laying waste Provence, and afterwards shutting himself up in his camp at the confluence of the Rhone and Durance, obliged Charles the fifth to abandon his enterprize; he had doubtless taken Fabius for his model, and he had certainly need of as much firmness as the Roman dictator to withstand the clamours of an army, which considered his conduct as entailing disgrace on the French name. But the inaction of the Constable, while Charles was passing the Alps in disorder and in a state the most deplorable, proves that it is more easy to overact the part of a great man than entirely to equal it.

Fabius was at once prudent and enterprizing; his firmness and his patience were equalled by his boldness. He followed Hannibal step by step through the plains of Campania, harassing him without respite, avoiding all the wiles and disconcerting all the projects of that able general. His defensive system, the result of study

and experience, may well, in point of talent, be ranked with the most brilliant invasions, and it was certainly attended with far greater difficulties. Secondary considerations were never allowed to interfere with the resolutions of this inflexible chief. In vain the African multiplied on all sides scenes of devastation and horror; the despair of the inhabitants, the outcries of his own soldiers, the sarcasms of his rivals, nothing could make him depart from the policy which he had adopted. He had the courage to sacrifice some provinces to the safety of Rome and of Italy, while the men whom I have been endeavouring to characterize sometimes expose a state to the irruptions of an enemy, by persisting in attempts to secure a sorry village.

With regard to the patron of retreating generals, it may be observed, that his retreat was not only brilliant but necessary. Ten thousand men lost in the midst of a great empire are not in a state to make conquests, and yet less to preserve them. Surrounded with enemies, without communication with Greece, without hope of succour, Xenophon could do no otherwise than retire; but, in every case, a retreat, presupposing parity of force, can only be the consequence of a defeat. They may be made more or less well, and there is undoubtedly much

merit in conducting them with ability; but, let what will be said, there is yet more in avoiding them altogether.*

It is therefore to be wished, that the world would abstain from comparisons which mislead opinion, and are sometimes more detrimental than advantageous to those very reputations which are by these means attempted to be established.

* Some military men have thought that this observation might be considered to reflect on the conduct of General Moreau, but I am persuaded that such a surmise cannot for a moment be entertained by a reasonable person. General Moreau is not only known by his brilliant retreat, but also by most important victories, and talents for offensive war. Indeed I might have cited his retreat in illustration of my maxims; I might have displayed him ever presenting a front to his enemies; always master of his own movements; sometimes returning on and defeating his pursuers, as at Biberach.

CHAPTER XL

OF REPUTATIONS.

A GIANT never appears so much a giant as when he is surrounded by pigmies. Many a man has owed his reputation to the mediocrity of his cotemporaries. The virtues of Cato astonish us the more, from the striking contrast which the degeneracy of his æra presents; a few centuries earlier, his austerity would have passed unnoticed. Socrates and Phocion were phenomena for the frivolous Athenians; at Lacedæmon they would scarcely have been distinguished from the mass of Spartans. The glory most difficult of attainment is to be great amid the great. Cæsar had that honour, in later times it has been reserved for Bonaparte. Cæsar appeared at an æra fertile in great men; Sylla, Crassus, Lucullus, Cicero, Cato, An-

tony, were his cotemporaries; Pompey had outdone them all; he outdid Pompey. In ordinary times the gain of a battle, a happy conception in politics, are sufficient to render a name illustrious; there are others in which these services will scarcely preserve it from oblivion, and in these latter times do we live. It might be imagined, that so many brilliant and well earned reputations have been united, as it were at the same instant, to form a magnificent pedestal for the fame of the chief favourite of genius and fortune.

CHAPTER XII.

OF BATTLES.

A CONSIDERABLE portion of mankind have a marked aversion to whatever announces audacity and vigour. These men, whom I shall call systematics, look at war in a point of view perfectly peculiar. Accustomed to admire only those campaigns in which armies melt away almost without fighting, they take under their protection all generals, whether successful or * unsuccessful, who act on their principles; they are those who so liberally dispense the surnames of Fabius, Xenophon, Cunctator, and who

* Marshal Luxembourg always beat the Prince of Orange, yet was the reputation of the vanquisher almost eclipsed by that of the vanquished.

transmit their heroes with this passport to posterity. These people have battles in abhorrence; with them I must ever be at variance, but I will, notwithstanding, boldly speak my sentiments.

As wars are only to be terminated by battles, I do not see what is to be gained by deferring them; from the delay results always irresolution on the part of the chief, and disgust on that of the troops. If you have neglected to engage your enemy while your forces were entire, and that you could have done it with advantage,* you may be certain that you will be unable to avoid a contest with your enemy when he shall be strong enough to deem it desirable.

Frederick opened all his campaigns by great battles, they secured to him a superiority for a considerable time. Indeed, how could he by any other line of conduct have made head against that expenditure, against which the exhausted state of his finances could not have provided. By hastening to establish a firm footing in an enemy's country, he caused the war to weigh less heavily on himself, at the

* *With advantage?* there lies the question. — Marginal note by General Jarry.

same time that he aggravated its pressure on his adversaries; a sure method of abridging its duration. With impoverished states and a limited population, this system was with him indeed an effect of necessity; but it has not the less been that of all great captains. True policy dictates the same line of acting to nations the most numerous and the most rich; and, if it be true that the most laudable wars are still dire calamities, surely no means should be neglected to render them less long and less ruinous. Now, these means consist only in the vigour and in the activity of the operations undertaken.

A great battle is an object of dread, chiefly because its effects are exaggerated and its nature misrepresented. I have witnessed battles of the first celebrity, in which the loss of men was infinitely smaller than can be conceived, with reference to the immense importance of their consequences. I have remarked that the risk and the loss of men is small, in proportion as the attack is sudden, impetuous, and determined. Every military man of observation and good faith will assent to this truth, though it will be contested by those who have seen war only in their studies.

It is not to be denied, that three months of

a campaign passed in inaction cost as many men as two battles, and withal produce nothing. It is then a most pernicious and most gross error to suppose, that protracted warfare is calculated to prevent the waste of the human species; the opinion is, notwithstanding, very general, because men are carried away by the impressions of the moment, and because few submit their judgment to the test of calculation and analysis. Thus thunder is to the vulgar an object of affright, while fever, which sweeps away more men in a day than perish by thunder in an age, intimidates only the sick. Whence this? the one strikes with noise, the other in silence pursues its frightful ravages. Man is ever the dupe of appearances. This disposition is, as it relates to war, strengthened by antient prejudices, and I know not what low jealousy, which prompts us to blame those very things which most deserve our admiration. If a great battle is fought, the general is every where accused of being prodigal of human blood. He will, perhaps, rate his loss at ten thousand men; the imagination swells this number beyond all bounds; it is whispered that the extent of the losses is withheld; and, though victorious, or rather because he is victorious, the general is blamed. Yet strong places fall

before him, abundance prevails in his camp, the country is delivered from the weight of large expenses, peace itself may be the fruit of this victory. Some chagrined politician will not the less tell you "this man has been fortunate, but his temerity placed the republic on the brink of ruin; our success hung to a mere thread, and, had we been vanquished, the Austrians would be at present at Gonesse."

Let us not forget, that, during the war of the succession, Lord Peterborough was obliged, in full parliament, to justify his conquest of Catalonia. The courtiers and systematics of his time accused him of having conquered against rule. However absurd such an imputation may seem, I will not hesitate to assert, that prudential motives alone have prevented it from being urged against men, who have excited the admiration of the universe.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. — INJUSTICE
OF PUBLIC OPINION.

I CANNOT conceive any thing more likely to discourage generals than the levity with which they are judged; the public is, in this respect, frequently guilty of extreme injustice: it seeks not to be informed of what tends to enhance the merit of success, or to extenuate the shame of defeat.

A general, who, with troops discouraged, harassed, denuded of absolute necessities, dares to invade a country of difficult access; who is exposed to the efforts of an enemy, powerful, able, well provided, whose troops are fresh, warlike, elated by recent victories; the man, who, in the teeth of so many obstacles, yet succeeds in his enterprize, is surely entitled to

the highest place in the esteem of his contemporaries: he must however be content to rank with him, who, commanding a formidable army, and opposed to an enemy already enfeebled, need only desire to vanquish, to vanquish in effect. It will not be inquired whether the one has drawn the utmost profit from the advantages of his original situation; whether he has followed up his successes with the requisite energy and activity; it will not be inquired, whether the most extraordinary genius was not necessary in the other to supply the place of his many deficiencies, and whether he has not greatly outstripped any reasonable expectation which could have been formed. No, it will be simply said, they are both great generals; it will be even much if reputation is dealt out equally between them. He who acts with a force disproportionate to the end in view must, to attain that end, leave the beaten track, trace out a new line of acting, and mask his weakness by extraordinary and uncommon enterprizes; this man will probably obtain only the second rank, and will have only achieved the title of "fortunate soldier."

It is true that these decrees, dictated, for the most part, by a spirit of party, or the secret desire of humbling superior merit, are often re-

versed by an equitable posterity; but posterity is itself not without its partialities, and its justice is sometimes dilatory. How long has not Alexander pointed the text of commonplace writers; rhetoricians, poets, pretended philosophers, have concurred in defaming him; yet Alexander cast the history of his life into the Hydaspes, because the writer had attributed to him actions which he never performed. At length, after a succession of ages, a great man appeared to display his trophies and avenge his memory.* All the world has repeated, after Florus and Titus Livius, that Hannibal knew how to achieve but not to profit by victories. Who will assure me that this reproach is well grounded. Is it easy to believe, that an army, which, notwithstanding its victories, was foiled in its attempts on fortresses of minor importance, would, without difficulty, have rendered itself master of Rome? The consternation into which the loss of the battle of Cannæ threw that city did not prevent her sending forth new armies from her walls, as it were in a

* This great man is Montesquieu. See Spirit of Laws, book 12, c. 15.

moment, and not only did the senate despatch reinforcements wherever they were required, but it actually refused to admit any part of the remnant of Varro's army to the defence of Rome and of Italy. Energy like this certainly bespeaks neither weakness nor discouragement. I confess, for my part, that, before I could bring myself to condemn such a man as Hannibal, I must be shewn proofs of irrefragable authority in lieu of conjectures hazarded long after the * event, and which may be fairly attributed to strong national antipathy. The Carthaginians have left us no written memorials, and success only determined, whether *Punic faith* or *Roman faith* should be synonymous with *bad faith*. How, too, can we rely on the correctness of details in an affair of so antient a date, when we see events happening under our own eyes alternately misrepresented by envy and by flattery?

* Magon addressed to Hannibal himself the same reproaches, which continue to be reiterated against him at this day. — Marginal note by General Jarry.

This, however, is not decisive as to Hannibal's misconduct, and the mind is left to determine between the judgment of that great man and Magon's. — TRANSLATOR.

Nothing is, unhappily, more common than that subaltern spirit, which, feeling itself unequal to any thing great, would sink every thing that is so to its own grovelling level,

CHAPTER XIV.

EXAMINATION AS TO WHETHER AUDACITY IN
WAR IS NOT PREFERABLE TO TOO MUCH
CIRCUMSPECTION.

SO little do I agree with the systematics, that I maintain, that, in war, measures are generally prudent in proportion as they are bold; that, the line of conduct which results from adventurous enterprize is ultimately more economical of human blood than one which is distinguished by slowness and procrastination. Examples present themselves in crowds to my memory.

I could cite Themistocles, who dared to embark an entire nation; and succeeded, by this bold and extraordinary expedient, in frustrating the efforts of some millions of men.

I could cite a Hannibal, who, after having bowed to the yoke of strict discipline, thousands of Barbarians, of language and manners wholly dissimilar, dared, with this heterogeneous army, to traverse the Pyrenees and the Alps, and to brave the most powerful people in the world in the very seat of their power : * and a Mithridates, the only man besides him who ever endangered or affrighted Rome ; † who astonished the world by his perseverance ; and, often deserted by fortune, ever rose superior to defeat ; who, at length, sold by his children, abandoned

* Hannibal supported himself for sixteen years in Italy, of which he would have rendered himself master, if the jealousy of faction had not succeeded in withholding from him the reinforcements which he required from his country. A man appeared as audacious as himself: Scipio, instead of disputing with Hannibal the soil of Italy, foot by foot, carried his forces into Africa, attacked Carthage ; and, to succour that city, forced Hannibal to abandon the theatre of his glory.

Long before the time of Scipio, Agathocles, besieged in Syracuse by the Carthaginians, left that city under the protection of a part of his forces, and passed over into Africa with the remainder. This unexpected invasion obliged his enemies to abandon their enterprize, and saved Sicily.

† The author is here not strictly correct : Brennus and Coriolanus, not to mention Pyrrhus, successively reduced Rome to the brink of destruction. — TRANSLATOR.

by his allies, and deserted by his troops, died, while planning the destruction of Rome and the conquest of Italy.

I could cite the inimitable Cæsar, whose every action might be drawn into example: I will, however, confine myself to the civil war, in the course of which he traversed Italy in eighteen days; and, after having pursued Pompey to Brundisium, flew into Spain, to defeat the armies of Afranius and Petreius; retracing his steps he reduced Marseilles; thence carried his arms into Thessaly; and, after defeating Pompey, at Pharsalia, followed him into Egypt. He reduced that rebel province in a very short time, and overran Syria and Pontus; vanquished Pharnaces; immediately after sailed for Africa, where he annihilated the united forces of Scipio and Juba, ten times more numerous than his own; lastly, passing from Italy into Spain, he completed his labours by the defeat of the sons of Pompey. Of this wonderful man, particularly, it might be said, that the achievement of great actions demands rather energy and despatch than circumspection and prudence.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.—JULIAN THE
APOSTATE.

I do not wish to multiply examples unnecessarily, but I cannot refrain from adverting to a prince, whose virtues are the more worthy admiration, as he lived at an æra in which corruption had attained its acme, and who, to the misfortune of being born in times so unfavourable to the developement of great talents, united that yet more fatal to his fame, of having irritated the ministers of a religion which has outlived him. The expedition of the Emperor Julian into Illyria has always appeared to me to be a masterpiece of military genius. I shall transcribe the relation which a celebrated historian has given us of it; the details which it contains appear to me of such importance,

that I have curtailed it only in a very small degree.

Constantius, jealous of Julian, excited the Barbarians to the invasion of Gaul. Magazines already formed, one on the lake of Constance, the other at the foot of the Cottian Alps, seemed to indicate the march of two armies, which the six hundred thousand bushels of flour, contained in each of these magazines, led the world to conclude would be immense. Julian, made acquainted with these preparations, and that Constantius was preparing to quit Asia, to attack him with all the forces of the empire, resolved to anticipate his enemies. He relied less on the number of his troops than on the celerity of his movements. In the execution of his hazardous enterprize he omitted nothing which could ensure its success, and the rest he committed to his fortune and his courage. He assembled and partitioned his army in the environs of Basle. Nevitta, general of cavalry, led a division of ten thousand men across Rhetia and Norica: another division, under the orders of Jovian and Jovinian, followed the winding roads which traverse the Alps and the frontier of Italy. Clear and precise instructions directed these generals to march with diligence and in close columns, which might, at all times,

be enabled to form in order of battle, with reference to the ground; to defend themselves against nocturnal surprises by advanced posts and vigilant guards; to anticipate resistance by an unexpected arrival; to elude curiosity by hastening departure; to exaggerate the forces of their party; to spread the terror of Julian's name; and to join their emperor with all possible expedition under the walls of Sirmium. Julian had reserved to himself the most difficult task; followed by three thousand brave and active volunteers, who, like their chief, had renounced all idea of retreat, he plunged into the recesses of the Black Forest, which conceal the sources of the Danube, and, for some time the fate of Julian was unknown to the world. The secrecy of his march, his diligence, and his energy, surmounted all obstacles. He traversed mountains and marshes, took possession of bridges, or passed rivers by swimming, and always pursued his route in a straight line, without inquiring whether the territory over which he marched belonged to the Romans or to the Barbarians. He, at length, appeared between Vienna and Ratisbon, in the spot where he intended to embark his army on the Danube. By a well-concerted stratagem he obtained possession of a flotilla of brigantines, which

were at anchor, and of a quantity of provisions, coarse indeed, but sufficient to satisfy the keen appetite of hardy Gauls, who, with their chief, boldly abandoned themselves to the current of the river. The vigour of the rowers, joined to a favourable wind, carried the flotilla seven hundred miles in eleven days; and Julian disembarked his troops at Bononia, which is not more than nineteen miles distant from Sirmium, before his enemies could have any certain advices of his having left Gaul. In the course of his long and rapid navigation, Julian never deviated from his principal object. He received the delegates of some towns which hastened to merit his favour by a voluntary submission; but he passed by the posts which the enemy possessed on the banks of the Danube, without essaying the effects of an useless and ill-placed courage. Lucinian, general of cavalry, who commanded the military force of Illyria, was alarmed and astounded at reports which he could no longer call into question, and yet felt a difficulty in believing. He had already made some defensive dispositions, when he was surprised, beaten, and taken prisoner, by one of the officers of Julian, who, on his part, attacked in person, and took the strongest and most populous town in the province. As

he traversed the long suburb of Sirmium the people and the soldiers broke out into the loudest acclamations.

If Julian, on the approach of the danger with which he was threatened, had repaired to the Rhine, and been content to keep himself on the defensive, it is evident that he would have been overpowered by his enemies; for, supposing that he had succeeded in resisting the efforts of the Barbarians, he would have fallen, enfeebled as he must necessarily have been, an easy sacrifice to the legions which were marching from the heart of Asia. By his incursion, as rapid as it was unexpected, he kept the Barbarians in check, and rendered abortive the vast combination which had been formed against him, and which was on the point of breaking forth. The capital of the empire dreaded the same fate as the capital of Illyria, and Constantius trembled in the midst of his army. There can be no doubt that the most complete success would have crowned the enterprizes of Julian, but the death of his rival put a period to the war, and Constantinople obtained an emperor worthy the bright days of Rome.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. — CURSORY
REFLECTIONS ON CHARLES XII.

I SHALL not be surprised if my ideas meet with contradiction, as almost all our military writers have inculcated a doctrine directly at variance with them: they enjoin so many precautions preparatory to an important movement or a battle; so rare a coincidence of circumstances for its execution; they adduce so many reasons for declining general engagements, and point out so few resources in the event of failure, that it would have been matter of wonder, if our military men, struck with reflexions so often reiterated, and believing themselves to be environed with rocks and precipices, had not contracted a timid circumspection, which they confounded with prudence; and

which gave to our wars that effeminate and nerveless character to which we have already adverted.

Let not, however, a greater extension be given to my precepts than I myself intended. I am not ignorant, that sententious maxims, now so much in vogue, are always open to a multitude of exceptions: so that, when I recommend a bold offensive to a timid defensive, it does not follow that it is expedient always to invade and always to attack.

If audacity alone sufficed to ensure success, Charles XII. would have been the greatest commander that has ever existed. It has been said of this prince that he was not Alexander, but that he would have been the best soldier of Alexander; the opinion is, it appears to me, too severe. There was much more of misfortune than of folly in his expedition into the Ukraine; all the auxiliary aids which he had provided failed him at the same moment. He may, however, be justly blamed for not yielding to circumstances: it was not the boldness of his original plan, but the ill-timed obstinacy with which he pursued it, which caused his ruin. He would, without doubt, have washed away the disgrace of Pultova in the sequel, if the Turks, who have since had sufficient cause to repent their

conduct, had not abandoned him when he was on the point of overwhelming his rival.

There are, then, conjunctions in which battles ought to be avoided; in which it is prudent to abandon projects which the most flatter our ambition: genius must appreciate these moments; no precepts can define them with sufficient perspicuity: but, whenever a general is weaker than an adversary, who has it in his power to attack, there should be no hesitation; he should anticipate him as the only means of putting things on an equality.*

* Ten thousand men may defend themselves with advantage in defiles against thirty thousand.

Should they quit their position, for the purpose of attacking, they would be envelopped and destroyed by numbers so superior.

Thus men, led away by the desire of giving maxims, are often betrayed into absurdities.—Marginal note by General Jarry.*

* There is certainly a want of perspicuity in the author's text, but not I imagine in his idea. He has declared, in a preceding paragraph, that it was not always expedient to attack: now, there cannot be a cause which more imperiously prescribes measures wholly defensive than that put by the annotator; and it must therefore be supposed to have been in the number of those exceptions, where the author deemed expedient, a deviation from the conduct he generally recommends.

The apparent contradiction might perhaps be reconciled, by reading, "an adversary who has it in his power to attack without disadvantage." — TRANSLATOR.

It has been observed of Turenne, that he was timid and circumspect in his youth, and became bold and enterprising at the age when most men cease to be so.* I am acquainted with a general who appears to follow the same progression: his last campaign is, without contradiction, the best which he has yet made.†

There are geniuses which are developed by study and experience; others, like Minerva, come armed at all points into the world.

The example of Turenne, justly cited as a model of wisdom, appears to me conclusive in favour of my assertions. History sufficiently proves, that nothing really memorable has ever been achieved without that boldness

* In the campaigns of 1672 against Holland, Condé was of opinion that we should take Maestricht before we penetrated into the United Provinces. Turenne caused this advice to be rejected, and affirmed, that success could only be obtained by celerity, surprise, and terror. His opinion prevailed, and experience proved its wisdom. Unhappily this plan was abandoned when the conquest was on the point of being completed. The Dutch had time to recover from their consternation, and the expedition failed.

† Moreau is probably the general to whom the author alludes, and the campaign that which was opened by the battle of Hohenlinden. — TRANSLATOR.

of conception, that fearless rapidity of execution, which has invariably distinguished commanders of the first order.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONTAINING SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE
PRECEDING CHAPTER.

I AM free to confess, that many examples may be adduced, where an inconsiderate valour has been productive of most mischievous consequences; but, I answer, that in general the causes of great military miscarriages have been very imperfectly ascertained. Nothing can better prove the embarrassment felt on these occasions than the custom of attributing these events to a sort of blind fatality to fortune: reasons which are adduced only where there is nothing else to say.

The common cause of the disasters which are attributed to imprudence is in reality the dearth of talent. Nature forms few of those

superior beings, the faculties of whose minds are in perfect equilibrium, who, possessing that extent of genius, which at once appreciates every difficulty and every resource, are withal endowed with a spirit, stimulated not discouraged by difficulties, which it is accustomed to surmount. This man, with the most extended views, will fail, because he wants perseverance or resolution in execution. That man will obtain only momentary success, though distinguished by boldness of enterprize, because he wants foresight, acts without premeditation, and is of a limited capacity; hence so many unsuccessful schemes, so many ephemeral reputations, so many enterprizes which mock human calculation and confound human reason; to this cause, too, may be traced that discrepancy which appears to subsist among historians, who blame at one time the measures which they praise at another, according to the event; contradictions which involve the mind in uncertainty, and give birth to the most absurd opinions.

These differences would not exist, if mankind could distinguish that which arises from the nature of things from that which is wholly the work of man. It would appear that what is presumption in one man is in another only a just estimation of his powers, and that the

defects which are supposed to be inherent in a plan, are often to be found only in the manner of its execution. A man of genius and one of ordinary capacity may on certain points concur, and conceive the same plan; it may even happen that the second shall enter upon it with greater eclat than the first; but the superiority of the man of genius will be established, when he is beheld rising more terrible from defeat, while the other is alike unable to maintain himself in, or to draw advantage from, his successes.

If the self-love which renders men blind permitted them to appreciate themselves with impartiality, they would abstain from every enterprize which exceeded their capacity, and we should not witness so many celebrated failures: it cannot, however, be reasonably expected that men will ever become sufficiently wise to be strictly just in judging of themselves. Government, however, should study the talents of its servants.* This man will be useful at the council table, that man may fill with advantage a secondary situation in the army; few, very few, are fitted for chief command.

* The science of discrimination is the most important which a government can possess.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF THE SECOND INVASION OF ITALY, BY
BONAPARTE.*

NO military event has been more differently estimated, more exercised the criticism of the systematics, or given rise to more extraordinary reasoning, than the last invasion of Italy, by Bonaparte. Though great talents have been on all hands attributed to the conqueror, there have not been wanting many who have in-

* The author observes, in his preliminary discourse, which I have not thought it necessary to translate, for reasons mentioned in my preface, "that if he has animadverted on the second invasion of Italy before the first, he has done so because he deemed it right to conform himself rather to the order of his ideas than to the chronological succession of events."

situated that his success was as much owing to good fortune as to able combinations. He has been accused of an impetuosity incompatible with that spirit of calculation, which attains its end, at the same time that it economizes the blood of the soldier. These insinuations, whatever might be their aim, have found their way even into studied harangues; and, though party-spirit was but ill concealed in them, there can be no doubt that they have been not wholly without effect. These considerations will oblige me to give some extent to this species of analysis, for which I trust that I shall obtain the impartial reader's indulgence.

The disasters which preceded the return of the conqueror of Egypt will not be readily forgotten. After beating alternately two of our armies and driving them out of Italy, our enemies kept the remnant closely blockaded in the city of Genoa, and threatened us with an invasion, from which it appeared nothing could save us. The corps which still defended the maritime Alps was in a most deplorable state. Entire battalions, driven by famine from their post, made their way into the interior in the greatest disorder. In order to repair these losses, the Directory caused thousands of conscripts, armed with sticks, and lately snatched

from the plough, to repair to this frontier. These unfortunates, meeting on their route the disunited remnants of an army in dissolution, and, imagining that every thing was lost, sought to evade the vigilance of their guards; or, if these succeeded in conducting them to the place of their destination, they arrived there discouraged and dispirited. Abandoned on their arrival to the most cruel scourge of war, inanition, an anticipated terror conducted them in crowds to the hospitals, and, shortly, the entire army became a prey to a destructive contagion.

La Vendée was rising from its ashes, and shewed a front more than ever formidable;* that province demanded prompt measures and numerous troops, yet it was impossible to denude (*dégarnir*) Switzerland or the banks of the Rhine. Where then were succours to be obtained? Where? from the beaten army itself. In lieu of sending forward a multitude of hal

* The Vendean party, by setting out with the taking of Nantes and of Mans, hoped to blind their opponents as to the weakness of their force and to encourage their friends; in fact, it was in want of every thing; but, if the English had provided it with warlike stores and with money, it might still have done much mischief.

naked recruits to certain death, Bonaparte recalled from the army of Italy all the corps which were not in a state to keep the field, he withdrew some troops from the victorious army of Holland, he carried on with ardour the war of La Vendée, or rather by wise measures arrested the irruptions of a volcano, on the point of bursting forth; and, what appeared to be rather the work of magic, than of human contrivance, created, at the same time, an army which was about to fix the fate of Europe, under the walls of Dijon.

This army, in the existence of which one half of Europe refused to believe, had attracted universal attention. Its formation, as sudden as it was unexpected, had rendered the most determined opponents of Bonaparte dumb. It broke ground, and put itself in march towards the sources of the Rhone; here all conjectures, all calculations, were baffled. The general expectation was, that it would have marched upon Nice to raise the blockade of Genoa; this direction appeared the most natural and the least difficult. Let us inquire into the consequences which would probably have resulted from the adoption of that measure.

In the first place, I am at a loss to discover how this army could have been subsisted in

Provence; nor could it, even after considerable successes, have obtained supplies equal to its wants in the territory of Genoa,* all communication by sea being completely interdicted. The mere possibility is scarcely to be conceived; but, without dwelling on this point, let us suppose that the first obstacles have been surmounted, that the enemy has lost battles and been obliged to raise the blockade of Genoa; the embarrassment relative to subsistence is but increased by the strong garrison of a place in a state of starvation. How many actions must already have been fought? How many brave men killed? and the question would remain to be decided. For an army at Genoa cannot be considered to be in Italy; only after it shall have quitted the narrow territory of the republic can the invasion of the peninsula be said to have commenced.

* It is universally known, that the state of Genoa is comprised in a neck of land extremely narrow, the length of which, from Tuscany to the Maritime Alps, is about seventy leagues. Genoa is situated nearly in the center; bounded to the north by the barren mountains of the Appenines, and on the south by the sea. Orange, citron, and some olive trees, thinly scattered, form the riches of this small district. The Mediterranean is the only field which the Genoese cultivate with profit.

Either the Austrians would have been in sufficient force to have given our army battle, and would have awaited it at the passes of the mountains, or they would have abandoned Piedmont and have retired behind the Po. But in their retreat they would have thrown sufficient garrisons into Coni, Turin, Tortona, Alexandria; Victor Amedeus and his timid court would no longer have thwarted their measures, and the emperor might have hazarded Piedmont without endangering his crown. Sieges must have been undertaken, or rather the army, in want of every requisite for enterprizes of that nature, must have confined itself to blockades. The one half of the army would then have been employed in investing these places, while the remainder would have established itself as a corps of observation on the right bank of the Po, where it would have been exposed to the enterprizes of the Austrians, whose vigilance and whose promptitude in recruiting their armies is sufficiently known. Granting that all their efforts would have been rendered abortive; that the army would have succeeded in obtaining possession of the blockaded places, how much time must not have been employed in this campaign? I will suppose that six months would have sufficed, and I appeal to judges

whether that be not a very favourable assumption. Now let us take into account the number of men killed in the actions which must have taken place, those who would have perished in the tedious blockades, those yet more numerous who would have died in the hospitals; to this calculation add the enormous consumption of money, provisions, supplies of all sorts, and then let it be decided whether a campaign of a few days and a battle of a few hours could possibly be so destructive.

I have supposed uninterrupted success and good fortune; if I were disposed to dispute, it would not be difficult to demonstrate the absolute impossibility of a favourable result. Genoa would certainly have capitulated before the arrival of the succours, and if our systematics could be candid, they would avow, that, according to their principles, nothing better could then have been imagined, than for the army to have entrenched itself behind the Var,* where our

* Those who might otherwise regard this supposition as altogether gratuitous would do well to remember, that Bonaparte effected the conquest of Piedmont and of one half of Italy in less than two months, with the same army, which, during more than five months, had never been able to traverse the Alps. I allude to his first invasion.

impatient French would have been mowed down by hunger and inaction.

However that may be, Bonaparte perceived at once the insufficiency of a movement, as slow in its execution as it would have been uncertain in its consequences. Without money, without a fleet, without even a sufficiency of troops, Bonaparte felt that it was necessary to throw aside the trammels of routine, to transfer the theatre of war, and to sacrifice to fortune, without neglecting any of those precautions which prudence enjoined. Bonaparte knows the people whom he governs;* he is aware that the French are captivated by whatever is bold and extraordinary, and never esteem themselves beaten while they continue in movement. He took into account even the probable measures of his adversaries; he astonished the Austrians, dazzled their general,† and, closing with them before they had recovered from their first surprise, in one day reconquered Italy.

* I confess that I do not like those military men, who make no allowance for whatever is independent of physical causes. They speak of an army as of a piece of mechanism.

† Bonaparte was on the banks of the Tisino, before Melas would consent to believe the accounts which were transmitted to him of his enemy's approach.

By a contradiction sufficiently descriptive of the frivolity of our military critics, it happened, that the details of that memorable day and the conditions of the armistice were scarcely known at Paris, before those very men, who had loudly blamed the expedition, were heard to decry the moderation of the conqueror; to declare that he had not sufficiently profited by his victory, and that he ought to have forced the Austrian army (more numerous than his own) to lay down their arms! a man must have heard such absurdities sported to believe them possible; for, even if Melas had not had a retreat within the walls of Genoa, he would have revolted at propositions so hard. Indignation and despair would have rendered furious an army which had long kept the balance of destiny in suspense. Maugre all our exertions, that army would have opened itself a passage, and its retreat would have preserved to the emperor all the fortresses of Piedmont. Melas, it will perhaps be said, was then inexcusable in not making this essay; no, the two generals acted conformably to their respective situations; the one and the other had equally strong motives for avoiding a second engagement. The one feared to see victory snatched from his grasp, and to find that again become questionable which Marengo

had decided; the other might render his situation worse, and even desperate; the first might well rest contented with having conquered all Lombardy as far as the Oglio:* the second esteem himself fortunate in being permitted to retire unmolested with an army which he preserved to his master.†

* See note 1 at the end of the volume.

† Latrille's own statement is certainly not of a nature to warrant his acquittal of Melas, nor is it possible to conceive, that any disadvantage of position could justify a general in yielding to an army inferior in number, denuded of every necessary, and paralysed by the losses it had sustained in an action, in which it obtained no other advantage than the field of battle; his own army possessing the whole chain of fortresses, which, in the common course of events, the author tells us in another place, it would have required six months to put his enemies in possession of. — TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

IF Genoa had been able to hold out a few days longer, there can be no doubt that the whole army of Melas would have been compelled to lay down its arms, as it would have been placed between the numerous garrison of that place, united to the corps under the orders of General Suchet,* and the victorious army. What proves that Bonaparte was not without hope of placing his enemy in this situation is, that, before he left Paris, it escaped him to say, on the receipt of his despatches, which announced the progress of the Austrians on

* As well to the corps under General Sherreau, which had crossed mount Cenis and already obtained some success.

the side of Nice, "I wish they were already on the Rhone." In effect, it is not difficult to perceive, that, according to his plan, the farther they pushed forward, the more difficult their retreat became.

Success, it may be said, has sufficiently justified Bonaparte; and, according to the poet,

Fu il vincer sempre mai laudabil cosa
Vincasi o per fortuna o per ingegno.

ARIOSTO, C. 15.

Be it so; but it may be objected, that he had no prospect of being able to effect a retreat in case of a reverse of fortune; for, after all, there was a possibility of his being beaten. Of all the objections which have been yet invented, this, I confess, has appeared to me the most specious, yet it will not be very difficult to find an answer. In the first place, a man who has proved himself so fertile in resources, and who has discovered expedients in cases the most desperate, cannot reasonably be imagined to have shut himself out from every hope of return in the event of disaster. Ordinary minds scan with difficulty the flight of genius: though I presume not to suppose that I have unravelled the projects of Bonaparte; yet, having had the ad-

vantage of serving in, and studying with the deepest attention, his first campaigns in Italy, and being thus made acquainted with that general's manner of converting defensive into offensive measures; retreat into attack; of allowing his enemies to chaunt hymns of victory in one quarter, while he overwhelms them with defeat in another; I may assure my readers that he would not have been destitute of means of retreat; I will say more, he had secured to himself some which could not fail,* as will soon be apparent. Secondly, Bonaparte was in the heart of Italy; this many would have considered to be a misfortune, but I am of a very different opinion. He was thus enabled to dispose of a vast extent of country, an incalculable advantage to a good evolutionist, and he incontestably possesses the talent of making an army move with rapidity, and of managing large bodies with dexterity. Thirdly, a considerable corps, detached from the army of the Rhine, had already traversed the Alps and was arrived to his support.† If I recollect right,

* The fort of Bard. — Marginal note by General Jarry.

† It had marched through the Grisons and penetrated into Italy over Mount Saint Gothard.

these troops took no part in the battle of Marengo;* it would then have been a fresh corps, which, united to the army, however enfeebled it may be supposed to be after the loss of a battle, would have arrested the progress of the enemy, and disputed the ground with him. Judging from what we have seen Bonaparte effect with more slender means, and in situations yet more critical, we may be certain that he would not have sunk on this occasion. Let us, however, suppose every thing to be at the worst, that fortune again abandons us, and that we are compelled to abandon Italy. Dare I say it? it is not towards France that we direct our march. The powerful army of the Rhine awaits us on the Danube, and across the Valteline and the Grisons we hasten to join it. If Baron Melas follows us, we are in a condition to face him; if he carries his army into Provence, we abandon a single province to his rapacity,† while we dictate peace to Austria.

* This corps protected the rear of the army; it defended the Jesino, Sesia, and Oglio, and pushed patrols as far as the Mincio.

† Victor Amedeus said, with reference to this part of our frontiers, "nothing so easy as to enter France, nothing so difficult as to subsist in it, nothing so impossible as to quit it."

I repeat that I am not in the secret of the commander-in-chief, but I will venture to assert, that my speculations are not very remote from the truth.

CHAPTER XX.

SURVEY OF THE CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR
7, (1798-9,) IN ITALY.

IN the unfortunate campaign of the year 7, in which we lost Italy in yet less time than we had employed to conquer it, great faults were committed; but the greatest is attributable to the Directory. The rapid conquest of the kingdom of Naples had rendered that body presumptuous; it imagined that nothing was impossible to French armies; nor did it make allowance for the enormous difference in the quality of Neapolitan and Austrian troops. When it saw the Russians hastening from the north, and the emperor assembling a puissant army on the Adige, it did not comprehend that not a movement was to be lost in evacuating the south of Italy, and in concentrating the

forces of France in Lombardy, at the same time that it gave to them a commander of talent, and honoured by the public esteem. By these means would Melas have been anticipated, and Suworow would have arrived only to be beaten in his turn. Not ten men should have been left in any of the fortresses on the other side of the Appenines, with the exception of Ancona. Is it to be supposed, that, if the Russians and Austrians had been beaten, a population, which tremblingly awaited the issue of the campaign to implore the clemency of the victor, would have dared to oppose resistance to our arms. But if this had formed a reasonable ground of apprehension, it should have operated as an additional motive to keep our force concentrated. The greatest fault that can be committed in war is the attempt to cover a too great extent of country; the finest army is thereby reduced to a state of weakness, which must necessarily occasion its ruin; and, in this view, the remark that it is more easy to conquer than to maintain possession of a country is perfectly just. It may be assumed as a general rule, that, when an army, which has to make head against several enemies, is in a country which it cannot defend at all points without weakening itself, the general should keep his

forces concentrated, and direct his undivided and incessant efforts to the destruction of the most formidable of his adversaries. To the constant observations of these maxims, Bonaparte owes, in a very great degree, his astonishing successes : never has he allowed himself to be drawn aside by those easy conquests, which, in the eye of the world, would not have been without glory ; but which might ultimately have endangered his reputation and the fate of his army. He has, it is true, occasionally made rapid incursions into the Tuscan and Papal territories, but always at moments when he had by victories ensured the inaction of the Austrians ; and with but few troops, which he hastened to reconduct to the army with a celerity peculiarly his own, and without ever allowing himself to be diverted from his main object. He was sometimes importuned to punish the insolence and the bad faith of these feeble enemies : “ On the Adige will I force the Pope and the King of the two Sicilies to sign an act of repentance ” was Bonaparte’s constant reply. Neither the one nor the other had at the time a single soldier in Lombardy ; but, was it not obvious, that, in humbling Austria, he became master of the destinies of her satellites.

After the defeat of Scherer on the Adigè, we were still in possession of vast resources. Enlightened military men have asserted, (and without laying claim to their abilities I may be allowed to participate in their opinion,) that, in lieu of taking the road to Piedmont, our army of Lombardy should have plunged into the heart of Italy, and have marched to effect a junction with that of Naples. One of two things would then have taken place; either Melas and Suwarrow united would have followed this movement with their whole force; or, what is not less probable, because in stricter conformity with Austrian policy, the two armies would have separated; Melas would have undertaken the reduction of the strong places, while Suwarrow marched alone in pursuit of the French. In the first case, the armies of M'Donald and Moreau, united, might have given battle to the allies under promising auspices, since they so long kept victory in suspense, though combating separately: in the second, their success was certain. This plan was not adopted: attention was directed to cover our frontiers, which might with safety have been neglected; the result was, that our armies, unable to effect a junction, were successively

crushed; the one at Placentia, the other on the Trebia, maugre prodigies of valour.*

* "Excellent." — Marginal note by General Jarry.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. — WHAT WAS
OUR SITUATION IN ITALY IN THE YEAR 7.
— WHAT THAT OF BONAPARTE AT THE
PERIOD OF HIS FIRST INVASION.

THIS series of reverses astonished Europe the more, as at that period we had subjugated the whole of Italy, and there remained not a single enemy which could cause us the least inquietude. From the Alps to the extremity of ulterior Calabria, no one dared to dispute our commands, and all the strong places were in our hands. The situation of Bonaparte after his first invasion was very different. Independently of being opposed during the whole war by forces very superior to his own, he was moreover surrounded by enemies, feeble, in truth, but numerous, perfidious, ready to take advantage of the

least reverse to overwhelm him: while Mantua remained unreduced, he could not be said to have more than one foot in Italy. The court of Turin was a hot-bed of conspiracies, and offered a refuge to malcontents of every country. Assassination had there been so well reduced to system, that no Frenchman could traverse Piedmont alone or unescorted. The Venetians probably contemplated with secret pleasure the first reverses of the Austrian arms, because they imagined that our policy would bear the same character of inconsiderateness and improvidence with that of Charles VIII. Louis XII. and Francis I; that this invasion would consequently meet with the fate of those before undertaken by our nation beyond the Alps; * but, when they perceived that we acted upon other principles, and that we were pursuing a system calculated to consolidate our dominion in Italy, they awaited only a favourable moment to declare against us; affording, in the meanwhile, to the Emperor, all the assistance which their feebleness and a remaining regard for appearances permitted. The sentiments of the Grand Duke could not be

* Nine times had the French over-run Italy without having been ever able to maintain themselves in it.

problematical. The Pope, and his neighbour, the King of Naples, farther removed from danger, were at no pains to disguise their wishes. The Duke of Parma and the Genoese, though attached to the nation, detested our government, and supported us not without repugnance.

Obliged to contain within bounds all these powers, by a happy mixture of policy and firmness, Bonaparte was at the same time obliged to conciliate, without appearing to fear, a people celebrated for its profound dissimulation, and whose manners and character form a striking contrast with our own; a people as implacable in its resentment as it is unreserved in the choice of means to gratify it; and whose blood boiled at the very name of Frenchman; odious as that name was become, by excesses which have tarnished the glory of our Ancestors, in the frequent inroads they have made into this beautiful country.

These difficulties were surely great, but they were not all with which the genius of Bonaparte had to wrestle. The most consummate art was necessary to lull the dark suspicion of a government, which decked itself with military trophies yet detested military men: a government, profuse in its praise of the armies collectively, but throwing constant impediments in

the way of individual officers : a government which viewed with dismay the standard of our legions, though still unwilling to confess, that to rule over a warlike people it is not less necessary to wield the sword than to wear the toga.

In the midst of so many vexations one great advantage remained to Bonaparte ; he held the sole undivided command in Italy. If government had persevered in its original intention, and had formed two armies there, as on the Rhine, all had been lost ; unless the ascendancy of Bonaparte's talents had drawn his colleague into his views, which was hardly to have been expected ; for mediocrity is ever jealous and conceited. As it was, Bonaparte was enabled to abandon himself to the suggestions of his genius ; he disconcerted the fallacious policy of the Italian cabinets, by opposing firmness and rectitude to political juggling ; he dissipated the impression of our former excesses, by subjecting to the yoke of the strictest discipline an army intoxicated with success, and which, on its entry into this fertile country, was suffering under the horrors of want : * in a word, by his

* Nothing is more exactly true than the address drawn by Bonaparte himself in his address to his troops : " Denuded

moderation, his firmness, his mildness, his respect for plighted promises, he acquired the confidence of a nation, whose affection is often withheld, even after its reason shall have been convinced.

of every thing you have found substitutes for every thing ; you have gained battles without cannon ; passed rivers without bridges ; made forced marches without shoes ; slept under the bare canopy of heaven without brandy, and often without bread."

CHAPTER XXII.

A PARALLEL.

IN the beginning of the last century, the Duke of Orleans, since regent of France, was sent into Italy under the tutelage of Marsin: he there displayed considerable talent, but unhappily without effect; and the French arms experienced reverses, of which the causes, in some respects at least, bear a strong resemblance to those, which have had so fatal an influence on the campaign of the year 7. This unfortunate approximation has induced me to enter into some details, extracted from the best contemporary memoirs, which I trust will not be found misplaced.

Lafeuillade had been ordered to undertake the siege of Turin; and Chamillart, whose son-in-law he was, had taken every care to provide him

with the means necessary to carry it on with vigour; but this general, in lieu of occupying himself exclusively with the execution of this duty, lost some valuable time, and uselessly fatigued his troops, in the pursuit of the Duke of Saxony, who sought only to engage his attention. This diversion afforded time to Prince Eugene to approach Piedmont; and he passed the Po in the presence of the Duke de Vendome, who, being on the point of relinquishing the command of the army, did perhaps not do all which was in his power to prevent it. On his arrival in Italy, the Duke of Orleans had left a corps in Lombardy, under the orders of Count de Medavid; and, after having observed the movements of the Austrians, he resolved to take post between Alessandria and Valenza, in order to defend the passage of the Tanaro, or to bring on a general engagement. The plan was well-imagined, but it was rejected by Marsin, who insisted on drawing near to Turin: the prince was obliged to concede.

On arriving under the walls of this city, the Duke of Orleans reconnoitred the posts and works of the besiegers; he found the lines imperfect, too extensive, and ill-guarded. He continued to receive from all parts advices relative to the march of the Imperialists; he

was of opinion that the army should quit the lines, and possess itself at least of the passes of the Doira; this also was opposed by Marsin. Recourse was had to a council of war; a miserable expedient, which, on this as on many other occasions, produced only hesitation and empty harangues. It is in truth scarcely possible to find one instance where a resolution of vigour has emanated from a council of war; this one coincided in opinion with Marsin. In vain the prince urged that the enemy's army was too far engaged in an exhausted country to be able to draw subsistence from it conjointly with our own; that Prince Eugene would not dare to expose it in an open country to the attacks of French impetuosity; and, finally, that, since a battle was determined on, it was much more in conformity with the national character to march towards the enemy than to await his attack behind indifferent lines. Nothing could shake Marsin, who, in default of argument, drew from his pocket an order from the king, which enjoined deference to his opinion.

Nevertheless the decisive moment approached, and already Prince Eugene, after having effected a junction with the Duke of Savoy, near Asti, had made a night-attack on the town of Placenza,

and passed the Doira at that place. Intelligence of this event was conveyed to Marsin, who refused to credit it, and would give no order. Shortly after, advices from all parts were received of the approach of the enemy; at length he appeared, and Marsin, convinced too late, wholly lost his presence of mind and self-possession. The Duke of Orleans, more calm, occupied himself with dispositions for defence; he wished to draw forty-six battalions from the besieging army for the defence of the lines; a counter order from Lafeuillade detained them at their post. The attack had commenced, and was prosecuted with extraordinary vigour; the lines were forced in several places; Marsin, mortally wounded, fell into the hands of the Imperialists; Lafeuillade, in despair, was running to and fro in the wildest manner, alike incapable of commanding or of obeying. The Duke of Orleans alone preserved his presence of mind, he fought with admirable courage, but ill obeyed, yet worse seconded; wounded first in the hip, then more severely in the wrist; he too was forced to retire. The dismay, confusion, and discouragement, became intolerable; and, what cannot be reflected on without horror, the greater part of the generals, more solicitous to preserve their equipages and the booty they had

amassed than to ensure the safety of the army and their own reputations, rather encreased than diminished the general disorder.

The Duke of Orleans, after having had his wounds dressed, returned to the field of battle; and, convinced that there remained no hope of success, gave orders to the artillery to retreat, to prevent its falling into the hands of the enemy; at the same time he assembled round him all the general officers within reach; and declared to them that there was no alternative except in retreat: "But," added he, "we must turn our back on the Alps, and march towards Italy, where Medavid awaits us; our forces will then be united; we shall occupy an abundant country; we shall confine the victorious army in the neighbourhood of Turin, where, without communications, it cannot long subsist, while we shall be enabled to dare and to undertake every thing."

This proposition was universally disliked. All eyes were directed towards France, where each person was desirous of depositing his booty in safety; a thousand objections were started; but the prince, weary of contradiction, imposed silence on all, by giving orders to march towards the Po. Notwithstanding all his efforts, while the troops moved in that direction, the equi-

pages, provisions, stores, were crossing the Alps on their road to France. The Duke of Orleans was at the same time made to believe, by false reports, that all the passes of the Milanese were guarded and entrenched, and that it was impossible to penetrate into that province. This prince, who was confined to a litter by his wounds, being obliged to trust wholly to the reports of others; deceived, disobeyed, betrayed, discouraged; at length yielded to the torrent; and thus, a battle in which not two thousand men had fallen, cost France all her conquests in Italy. This misfortune was yet more severely felt, when it became known, that, at the time the action took place, Turin had not powder left for more than four days; and (which proved the wisdom of the plan of the Duke of Orleans, and redoubled his regret,) that Médavid had obtained a decisive advantage over the Prince of Hesse Cassel near Castiglione de Stivere, and had pursued him as far as the Adige.

This Médavid was not without talents. The retreat of the main army did not disconcert him: he proposed two plans; the first to put his troops into cantonments in Lombardy; to abandon the strong places, which could not otherwise be defended, to their own means of resistance; to cover the principal, and, above

all, Mantua; to provide them abundantly with all requisites for sustaining a siege; to act on the defensive, and to await the course of events: the second, to march with his little army through the Venetian and Ecclesiastical territory straight to the kingdom of Naples; which still maintained itself, and would by these means have been preserved to the Spanish crown.

Neither of these projects was adopted. The cabinet of Versailles, lately so imperious, had fallen into the opposite extreme; it feared to irritate the Venetians and the Pope;* it preferred negotiation; and, in order to obtain the unmolested return of the troops, yielded Italy to the enemy.

This example contains important lessons. In it may be perceived the inconveniences of that defensive system, which is ever the fertile cause of all great military disasters; those of a division of power, as well as those, not less considerable, arising from the irresolution and weakness of commanders. It is that weakness which emboldens general officers to disobey the commands of their chief, and occasionally to persuade him,

* Prince Eugene had not that fear. Maugre the remonstrances of the court of Rome, he levied heavy contributions on the districts of Bologna and Ferrara.

in spite of his better judgement, to a dishonourable retreat, a hundredfold more disastrous than a defeat. The conduct of the court also shews the fatal effects of that consternation, which will, when indulged in, preclude the use of those resources which are to be found under the most severe reverses, if there be firmness and presence of mind to employ them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FIRST INVASION OF ITALY BY BONAPARTE.

WHEN for the first time Bonaparte undertook the invasion of Italy, the weakness of his army, and the multitude of obstacles which he had to surmount, demanded all the efforts of a transcendent genius: he far surpassed our expectations. Never were successes turned to better account; never were manœuvres combined with more depth and ability.

The military profession is, perhaps, of all professions, that which most requires constant practice: inaction is the bane of soldiers. The war, which had been waged since 1792 on the side of the Alps, was, however, correctly speaking, only an armed neutrality. The only affairs had been for the possession of the summits of some

mountains.* The generals, accustomed to these partial attacks, had lost on both sides even the idea of great military operations. The Austrians never entertained the intention of penetrating into France on that frontier, unless, perhaps, during the siege of Lyons; and we were supposed to entertain yet greater repugnance for an invasion, which, since the misfortunes of Francis I. was considered as the height of folly. Bonaparte profited by this temper and security, and by the rapidity of his operations dazzled not only the generals of the enemy, but those of his own army.† He allowed the enemy no

* The battle of Loano had no other result; and the French army, which, after having gained it, ought to have wintered in Lombardy, or at least in Piedmont, remained in the territory of Genoa, where it suffered all imaginable privations.

† I recollect, that almost all our generals were not only surprised, but displeased, at this activity. They declared loudly that troops were not to be so commanded; that they must necessarily sink under so many fatigues, &c. Had it not been for these murmurs, Bonaparte would perhaps not have halted at Milan, but pushed forward at once to the Adige. Nevertheless, if it be recollected that the army had for thirty-six days not ceased to fight and to march, it will be admitted that eight days repose was become almost indispensable. What, moreover, proves how necessary our presence was in Lombardy, is, that the revolt of Pavia broke out as soon as Bonaparte had left Milan.

time to recover from his first disorder. After the battle of Montenotte and of Millesimo, he made dispositions for invading Lombardy, very certain that Beaulieu's first care would be to cover the possessions of his master; this was a master-stroke; it had two remarkable effects: it prevented the union of the two allied armies, which it hence became more easy to contend with, and it indisposed the court of Turin towards Austria. The battle of Mondovi was quickly followed by the defection of the King of Sardinia. We passed the Po, at Placenza, while Beaulieu, duped by our feints, was entrenching himself between the Tesino and the Sesia.* The battle of Lodi followed soon after, and the Austrian army, unable to arrest our progress on the Mincio, was obliged to throw itself into the bishopric of Trent, and to abandon Italy.

* Bonaparte had purposely caused it to be inserted in the armistice concluded with the King of Sardinia, that the French should be at liberty to cross the Po at Valenza, and all the movements of the army appeared to coincide with this project; it is therefore not surprising, that the illusion of the Austrian general was complete. There are decisive moments, it has been somewhere said, where genius must fathom genius; this occasionally happened to Turenne and Monticuculli, but Beaulieu could not fathom Bonaparte.

This great work was performed between the 20th Germinal,* when we were attacked at Voltré, and the 12th Prairial,† that is to say in fifty-two days; in which interval four general engagements and a great number of minor actions were fought.

Those who were jealous of the glory acquired by a young man, who had scarcely completed his twentieth year, asserted, (so exactly does the language of envy under all circumstances resemble itself,) that this conquest was to be considered only in the light of a fortunate indiscretion; that all our invasions of Italy had had the same brilliant outset, though their consequences had been uniformly fatal; that this one would not have a better success than the rest, as Bonaparte had involved his army in a country from which he could never extricate it. Sensible men, while they admired the talents displayed by Bonaparte, did not yet dare to pronounce upon his destiny. "One victory," they observed, "prepares the way for new triumphs; it is only necessary to push an enemy once shaken to level him with the earth. Hitherto our hero has profited by the favours

* 8th April.

† 30th May.

of fortune with ability, it must be seen whether he is able to fix them; he has commenced in a brilliant manner, let us see how he will perfect his work and maintain his superiority. Offensive operations are not the most difficult part of generalship; and defensive warfare, judiciously conducted, is the surest criterion of superior talents; it is there that we await Bonaparte."

We have considered what was his situation in Italy in a political point of view, and the manner in which he succeeded in surmounting the obstacles to which that situation gave rise; it remains to be examined, whether his conduct, with relation to military matters, was in an equal degree masterly and deserving of praise.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF DEFENSIVE WAR. — LINE OF THE ADIGE;
 HOW DEFENDED BY BONAPARTE. — BATTLE
 OF CASTIGLIONE.

It is not to be denied, that defensive war is the most difficult branch of the military art. The enemy is always acquainted with your views, while you remain ignorant of his. Your movements are ever cramped by the fear of exposing yourself to be attacked at a disadvantage, or of falling into some hidden snare; those of the enemy, on the contrary, are free and unembarrassed. Enabled to give to his manœuvres whatever latitude he chuses, he prepares at a distance his enterprizes, and your utter ruin is only to be averted by penetrating into, and anticipating, his designs; this the fa-

cility which he possesses of masking them renders difficult and uncertain.

Entrenched lines, as they tend to confine movements yet more, are but an additional inconvenience; it is universally acknowledged that rivers afford but a feeble barrier, and the passage of them is an operation, which, when well combined, has in no instance failed of success. Nevertheless, there are circumstances under which it may become necessary to defend them; thus, the long resistance of Mantua forced Bonaparte to take post behind the Adige, in order to cover the blockade of that fortress.

Feuquieres, who had the means of judging, esteemed the line of the Adige to be extremely faulty, and Catinat could never maintain himself on it when opposed to Prince Eugene. If Bonaparte, who occupied it for such a length of time, has succeeded better, we shall find the cause to lie in the boldness of his manœuvres. Sometimes he awaited the enemy, more often he sought, and dispersed or destroyed, his forces, before they had had time to undertake any enterprize.

The common fault of those who have been charged with the defence of lines has been the attempt to guard them equally in all their extent; a capital fault, to which the armies

posted behind lines, whether natural or artificial, have generally owed their reverses. Bonaparte avoided it: he felt that no army could be sufficiently strong to line with troops the whole course of the river, from the Corona to the White Canal; at least, that an army so disposed could not oppose any effectual resistance to an enemy, who, threatening every part of his extensive line, while he concentrated his chief force on a particular point, would at that point succeed in dividing the army, which it would then become impossible to rally, either for offensive or defensive purposes. He adopted therefore a different disposition, and formed his army into three principal corps. The right corps occupied Porto Legnago; the left, Montebaldo and Rivoli; the center, Verona; a detachment was posted on the Lake di Garda. These different corps had orders to cover themselves by advanced guards; to reconnoitre the country on their flanks by means of light troops posted with that view; and to keep themselves united and compact. The army, by this arrangement, might be brought together with promptitude in any direction; and, as it was impossible to prevent the enemy from passing the river, it was at least providing that he should not do so with impunity.

The wisdom of this disposition was quickly felt. Wurmser suddenly appeared at the upper extremity of the Lake di Garda with a formidable army. It became necessary to yield to the torrent and to raise the siege of Mantua, which was fast verging to a conclusion;* but, notwithstanding the disorder arising from the first moments of consternation, the French army was in a moment united. Whether with a view to increase the confidence of the enemy, to enable his own troops to recover from their panic, to avoid the necessity of engaging to a disadvantage, or, lastly, to procure the choice of the ground and of the time of action, Bonaparte withdrew behind the Mincio. In the intoxication of success, Wurmser interpreted this movement into an avowal of our inferiority, and concluded that he had now no obstacle to fear. He made a triumphal entry into Mantua, amid the acclamations of the garrison and the inhabitants: extending his left to the Po, he afterwards pushed forward his right as far as the town of Brescia. There Bonaparte

* I have heard it asserted by General Sanson, an officer of engineers, distinguished alike by his abilities and his valour, that the place could not have held out longer than six days.

awaited him. The Austrian army was beaten at Lonado, and overwhelmed at Castiglione.

Wurmser enjoyed his triumph but a short time, and the wretched remains of an army, recently so formidable, sought a refuge in the mountains of the Tyrol.

CHAPTER XXV.

INVASION OF THE BISHOPRIC OF TRENT.

POSTERITY will be astonished at the promptitude with which Austria formed new armies. Never has that power given stronger proofs of the extent of her resources than during this memorable campaign. A month after the battle of Castiglione, the Austrian army was more formidable than ever. Already Wurmser, who consoled himself for his defeat by reflecting that he had at least saved Mantua, was preparing to reassume the offensive, and he was on the point of penetrating into Italy on two columns; one was to follow the course of the Brenta, the other that of the Adige. On one side, a numerous camp was already established, in the environs of Bassano; on another, an advanced guard occupied Alla, behind which

the rest of the enemy's army occupied positions which nature and art appeared to have combined to render impregnable.

Whether from the effect of that security which generally follows unexpected success, whether from the dictates of a jealous and narrow-minded policy, the Directory had sent into Italy, since the invasion, only feeble reinforcements drawn from the army of the West; so that the French army, which the fatigues of seven months, and its very victories, had essentially weakened, and which was moreover forced to employ a great part of its force in the blockade of Mantua, could not reasonably expect to combat with success a numerous army, for the formation of which the emperor had exhausted his fine army of the Rhine.

The moment was awful; an ordinary man would probably have been content to chuse a favourable position, and to concentrate and fortify his army in it by all possible means. Bonaparte resolved to attack the enemy which threatened him, and who, confiding in the number of his soldiers, already exulted in the prospect of his triumphs and of our defeat. This resolution gave rise to an operation, the boldness of which is not surpassed by any of

Bonaparte's subsequent achievements, and which appears to have been the model on which his last invasion of Italy was formed.

He left Milan in the middle of a ball, which was supposed to engage all his attention; and, on arriving at Verona, put the army in motion. By advancing heads of columns, on the road to Vicenza, he caused it to be believed, that he intended to attack at the same time both the Austrian corps; but, suddenly changing his direction, he threw himself, with all his army, into the valley of the Adige. Nothing could withstand the shock of this impetuous mass. The defiles of Marco, the entrenched camp of Mori, were forced. Roveredo, Colliano, fell into the hands of the victorious army. Wurmser, who was occupied in reviewing the fine grenadiers of the Rhine, was aroused by the intelligence of this sudden irruption: he hastened to Trent, which he was obliged to quit with the utmost precipitation to avoid falling into the hands of our troops, who were entering that place almost at the same time. While, at the head of one division, Bonaparte overthrew all who opposed him, and forced the enemy to pass the Lavis, he caused the rest of the army to cross the mountains which separate the valleys of the Adige and

Brenta. Wurmser, who still preserved half of his forces entire, which in number equalled the whole of ours, had already made formidable dispositions for defence, and Bonaparte was forced to employ all his talents and all the valour of his troops to overcome the obstacles which that old warrior threw in his way. He succeeded, notwithstanding; and, after having successively beaten the Austrians at Primolano, Covolo, Cismone, he completed their discomfiture at Bassano. All would have fallen into the hands of the victor after this battle, if General Kilmaine, who had orders to throw four hundred men into Porto Legnago, had not neglected to do so, from an apprehension of endangering Verona, which he was obliged to defend from without, and to overawe from within, with a handful of men. Wurmser took advantage of this circumstance, and effected his retreat with the remnant of his army through Porto Legnago;* he had the precaution to leave a garrison in this place, too strong indeed for the object in view,† but which arrested the

* He had not more than from eight to ten thousand men left, the rest were taken, killed, or dispersed.

† It consisted of one thousand six hundred and seventy-three men.

march of one division of the French army, and thus enabled him to reach Mantua, where he was to experience new reverses.*

It would be necessary to travel over the theatre of this admirable expedition, to form a just conception of the hardihood of the plan, and of the difficulties attendant on its execution: they were such as to intimidate officers who can certainly not be accused of want of courage. Previous to quitting the narrow valley of the Brenta to defile upon Bassano, Bonaparte halted for some minutes in the village of Solagna; he perceived the astonishment with which some persons contemplated the precipices in which we were engaged. A general officer,† whose talents and bravery entitled him to use such language, observed to another alike worthy of hearing it: ‡ “our chief has need of a reverse to become a perfect general:” “I admit,” replied Bonaparte, laughing, “that the position of the two armies is singular;” and so in truth it was. Conceive an army, which abandons a country it is charged to defend, and which, after having destroyed a part of the enemy’s

* The battle of St. George.

† General Berthier.

‡ General Augereau.

forces, finds itself directly in the rear of those which remain, and drives them on that very country, from which, notwithstanding, it wishes to keep them at a distance: the case is perhaps unexampled in military annals. In one solitary instance, Bonaparte was deceived in his calculation. He felt, as has been already shewn, that we were lost if we awaited the enemy in our positions, but that, by attacking him in narrow passes, where he could not deploy, nor take advantage of his numerical superiority, he might reasonably expect successes, which French impetuosity indeed rendered almost infallible. But Wurmser might manœuvre with the troops of his left, and fall on our rear; to attack them was to put all to the hazard, our object was merely to keep them in check. All maps agreed in pointing out a road along the crests of the mountains. A division* received orders to follow it, taking care to regulate its movements by those of the troops in the valley. If this division could have fulfilled its destination, it would not only have protected our flanks and rear, but the effect of its march, at the very outset, would have been to cut off the communication between the two portions of the

* Augereau's.

Austrian army, and we should have been saved the trouble of forcing the passes of the Brenta, which would have been commanded by this division. Unhappily, the road was not in existence, and on the second day this division was in a manner lost among inaccessible rocks, which presented no issue. It became necessary to retrograde, to descend from the mountains, and to follow the route of the other columns. The mistake was embarrassing, but Bonaparte had at least the consolation of knowing that those mountains, which were impassable for us, must be equally so for the enemy; he therefore pursued his route; but, as we have already seen, the warmth with which he pushed his enemy did not cause him to lose sight of what he left behind, since by the first opportunity he despatched two divisions to the Brenta.*

This method of carrying on defensive war will, I am persuaded, be found novel. A new actor is about to appear on the stage, and his efforts will give rise to new combinations of art and to new prodigies of valour.

* Those of Augereau and Massena. The first traversed the mountains near Matarello; the second doubled back suddenly from Trent and passed the first night at Levico. The other advanced as far as Borgo-di-val-di-Sugano.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. — BATTLE
OF ARCOLE.

WHETHER it was that Bonaparte no longer doubted of the prompt surrender of Mantua, and that he wished in that case to secure to himself the means of penetrating without obstacle into the heart of Austria, or whether only with a view to obtain a greater extent of country to manœuvre in, and to be enabled to reconnoitre at a greater distance the movements of the enemy; to whatever cause owing, he left in the Tyrol a division of his army. But, although it appeared very probable that the resistance of Mantua could not be much farther prolonged, and although it was scarcely to be conceived that the Austrians, who had so lately been as it were annihilated, could

again undertake any offensive enterprize, yet would the homage which I pay to the talents of a great man be less worthy his acceptance, if I dissembled, that, in my opinion, he was wrong thus to lock up a part of his forces.

Turenne, while he ingenuously confessed his faults, was wont to say, that whoever boasted of having never committed any had certainly not made war very often or very long. To be faultless is in fact a privilege beyond human attainment. The most brilliant of the triumphs of genius consists in deriving success from disaster,* for disasters grow out of each other with greater facility than successes. Let us consider how Bonaparte repaired the fault, which we dare not, without temerity, perhaps, attribute to him.

An Austrian army, the existence of which was almost doubted, arrived at once in Italy, through Friuli, and presented itself on the banks of the Piave. It had some success in the first instance, and forced our troops to fall back on Vicenza. Bonaparte flew to meet the enemy and obliged him to repass the Brenta. As he was preparing to prosecute his good fortune,

* This we have already seen Bonaparte effect at Castiglione.

he received intelligence that the division left in Tyrol had been forced in its positions on the Lavis, and was effecting its retreat: he immediately fell back on the Adige. This retrograde movement emboldened Alvinzi, who advanced as far as St. Martin; here he was repulsed, and the affair at Caldero would have completed his defeat, if a want of concert in the divisions charged with the attack, and a tremendous shower which fell at the same time, had not snatched the victory out of our hands. We passed this night on the field of battle. This war of detail would quickly have exhausted our army, which required a decisive engagement. We retired under the walls of Verona; but, while Alvinzi was preparing to attack us there, the army took advantage of the darkness of the night, and, following the course of the river, defiled upon Ronco.* The

* In the very moment that the general meditated this fine movement, which, had it been as well executed as it was ably planned, would have rendered our victory so complete and so easy, the commissioner of the government, grieved at our want of success in the affair of Caldero, entered his apartment, and, with a dejected air, observed, "well, general?" "Well," he interrupted with a smile, "beating, beaten; beaten, beating; 'tis the fortune of war;" and, turning to his secretary, continued to dictate the order of march.

intention of Bonaparte was to have passed the Adige at that place, to have got possession of the enemy's immense park of artillery, and to have attacked him in reverse. The village of Arcole was occupied, through which it was intended that the army should defile on the morrow; but it would seem that fortune on this occasion took pleasure in confounding the designs of genius. By an extraordinary concurrence, a division of the enemy, which Alvinzi had probably detached with a view to turn us and to open the communication with Mantua, presented itself in the night before Arcole, which was instantly evacuated by our troops.

It has been universally thought, that the evacuation was made contrary to the intentions of the commander-in-chief,* and that it was the effect of an unfortunate misunderstanding; but the opinion is erroneous, though it has derived confirmation from the prodigious efforts which the French subsequently made to retake this post; but it was not for the post

* Latrille's narrative certainly countenances this opinion, unless he means to imply, that the commander of the troops which originally occupied Arcole was furnished with discretionary powers from Bonaparte. — TRANSLATOR.

in itself that these efforts were made, but because a battle was necessary and inevitable. We will now examine, whether it was more advantageous that the battle should be fought in Arcole or beyond that village.

If we cast our eye over the ground, we shall find, that, by advancing beyond Arcole, we should have been placed in an extensive plain, where the Austrians would have been able to extend themselves, to deploy all their forces, and to overwhelm us by their great superiority of numbers; by remaining on the hither side of that post, we occupied a country intersected with canals, and in which we could be approached, at least in a great measure, only by a single point, and that point was a dike of little breadth. The best proof of the natural difficulty of the ground is, that the enemy did not dare to advance beyond Arcole, where he strengthened himself by entrenchments, and remained constantly on the defensive.

Moreover, under the first supposition, the enemy, by manœuvring with ability, might have obtained possession of the interval which we should have left between the rear of our army and the Adige; a movement which would have rendered our retreat extremely difficult, if not impossible; in the position which we

chose, on the contrary, the retreat was secured: one of our flanks touched the river, and, owing to the narrowness of the valley through which we should have retired, the most feeble rear-guard would have sufficed to check the enemy's pursuit.

Not any of these considerations escaped Bonaparte. As the presence of an enemy's corps prevented him from concealing his march, he felt that his original project was impracticable; but, if he was disappointed, in that an unlucky chance had deprived him of the advantages which he had expected from his bold manœuvre, he yet concluded, that, in the necessity he was under of bringing on an action, he could not find a field more favourable; this reflection determined him to abandon Arcole to the Austrians, and from that moment he took as much pains to attract their attention to, as he had before used to divert it from, that point: this needs explanation. In order to render the battle decisive, it was necessary that the whole Austrian army should be present, and its number would itself become embarrassing, in a situation where it could only act partially. There I conceive the secret of the great noise and little effect of the first attacks to lie. Bonaparte wished to astonish his adversaries on

the two first days, but it was only on the third, in my opinion, that he was resolved to conquer: on that day he manœuvred, on the others he had only fought. All the resources of science and genius were employed to obtain success, what remained was effected by extreme valour. The Austrian army sold us this trophy at a dear rate; and it may be said, that, if Bonaparte had till then combated only for glory, he combated on this occasion for the honour, the existence, the safety, of his army. Several times he mingled in the ranks of the grenadiers, and braved that death which was afraid to strike him. He finally obtained a victory, which was always on the point of eluding his grasp, only by efforts of heroism, of which modern ages afford no example.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. — BATTLE OF
RIVOLI.

THIS campaign, so fertile in events, continued in the middle of winter, and appeared to increase in activity as it approached to its catastrophe. We are at a loss whether most to admire the fortitude of that small band of heroes, who, for ten months, continued to triumph over all obstacles, or the persevering courage of that power, which no disaster could appal, and whose reiterated efforts exemplified the fable of the giant, who derived new strength from each overthrow. This fine monarchy long struggled against the ascendancy of genius, and poured forth its numerous population to preserve a country, which it was fated to lose for ever.

Two months had scarcely elapsed since the battle of Arcole, before Alvinzi reappeared in Italy at the head of a powerful army. We had resumed our antient position on the Adige. Alvinzi caused us to be attacked on all points at the same instant. His plan was admirably conceived, and it would probably have succeeded against a less active or a less able enemy. As the interval which separates Verona from Porto Legnago was the weakest part of our line, General Provera had orders to break through it; and, with a corps of ten thousand men, to march straight to Mantua without attending to what might be passing round him. The better to mask this movement, Alvinzi himself, after having endeavoured to alarm us on the side of Verona, was to make his chief effort on our left, and to endeavour to force our line of Rivoli. If this project had succeeded entirely, the situation of our army would indeed have been critical. The effect of Provera's movement would have been to intercept the communication with our right wing; to raise the blockade of Mantua; and his corps, united with the garrison of that place, must have succeeded in crushing whatever escaped from Rivoli.

The attack being general and simultaneous,

it was at first impossible to penetrate the designs of the enemy. It was therefore necessary to wait till they became developed, and to hold the army prepared against each event: to this plan Bonaparte adhered; he soon perceived the aim of the enemy; but the justice and rapidity of his ken would have been useless, had he not, as it were, multiplied himself by a rapidity which appears more than human. The same troops are found fighting nearly at the same moment at Verona, at Rivoli, under the walls of Mantua, and give to historical truth an appearance of fable.

Bonaparte perceived at once that it was essential to the safety of the army to render abortive the enterprise on Rivoli; in which case, the division of Provera, instead of being dangerous, would be inclosed as in a trap. He hastily assembled all the troops within his reach, flew to meet Alvinzi, and fought one of the most brilliant actions of the age. The gaining this battle was the more surprising, as it appeared lost from its very commencement, as the enemy had obtained possession of our position, and a part of his forces had taken us in reverse. There is perhaps no instance of an army so situated having come off victorious; hence it appears that there are no obstacles

which may not be overcome by genius and valour united.* Not only was Alvinzi beaten completely, but Provera, who had effected his passage, was himself overwhelmed in sight of Mantua, where the hero of France forced the brave Wurmser to be a passive spectator of his disaster.

It appears to me that Alvinzi's great fault on this occasion was to have embraced too

* According to received opinion, an army is considered as beaten as soon as it is turned and taken in reverse. Bonaparte has never believed in the infallibility of apothegms of this kind ; and, in lieu of subjecting his manœuvres to those of the enemy, he has always subjected the enemy's to his own. When at Lonado he perceived that the Austrians were endeavouring to outflank him, instead of extending his order of battle to prevent it, he caused columns to be formed, and, advancing directly against the centre of the enemy, divided his line almost without experiencing resistance.

If armies, taken in reverse, have been almost invariably beaten, it is in a great measure owing to the consternation which the bravest men are apt to feel when they find the enemy at their backs. It is not the less true that this manœuvre on the part of the enemy may with coolness and ability be turned upon him. From the very nature of the movement he who turns is himself turned ; he must, besides, weaken his centre to manœuvre on your flank and rear ; in lieu of losing time in executing changes of front, advance directly upon him : there cannot be a moment more favourable.

extensive a plan : had he been content to keep us in check in the centre and on the left by false demonstrations, and followed Provera with the bulk of his forces, it is probable that he would have forced us to raise the blockade of Mantua, and to abandon our positions on the Adige ; but he might then perhaps have found another battle of Castiglione.

This last effort had exhausted Austria ; and Bonaparte, no longer fearing to give a great latitude to his movements, again caused the Tyrol to be occupied, and himself advanced, at the other extremity of his line, to the gates of Rome. Mantua fell, and the defensive ended. Here I terminate these irregular sketches, in which I fear rather to have disfigured than clearly to have rendered the traits of genius. Worthily to pourtray Alexander would require the pencil of Apelles.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DIGRESSION RELATIVE TO THE ARMY OF THE
SOUTHERN PYRENEES. — BATTLE OF THE TECH.

THE kind of episode which I am about to present to the reader, and which I consider as a necessary concomitant to what precedes, may at first sight appear to him to be wholly unconnected with it; he will even find a strong contrast between the animated scenes which we have been describing and those which are now to engage his attention; but, though the latter are less brilliant, they are not less interesting than the former, nor less fertile in useful applications.

The army of the Southern Pyrenees was, from its position, not called upon to play a leading part; our northern frontier was in a special degree the object of the solicitude of government; and, while all the efforts of the

nation were directed towards that part, the south was abandoned to its own means : scarcely did we deign to recollect that there existed such a power as Spain. The core of the army of the Pyrenees consisted of two or three old battalions of the line, and of some battalions of volunteers half disciplined ; it was recruited, on urgent occasions, by levies en masse, in the neighbouring departments.

The Spaniards, who possessed a regular army, a good cavalry, a numerous artillery, and an able chief,* easily obtained successes. In the first campaign they took Colioure, Port Vendres, Bellegarde, the Fort des Bains, Pratt de Molo, and destroyed our best troops ; they were on the point of investing Perpignan, which, yet worse provided than the fortresses on the first line, could have opposed only a feeble resistance, when a crusade or general levy on the southern departments united itself with the remnant of our army. They were attacked in their camp of Rivesaltes, where French impetuosity, favoured by the darkness of the night, performed prodigies. The rout of the Spaniards was complete ; they were rallied only behind the Tech. Their

* Ricardos.

camp, abundantly stored, fell into the hands of the victors : the levy-men, loaded with booty, returned to their homes ; and the army, unable to pursue its successes, remained in its original state of weakness. At length, after the siege of Toulon, government resolved to employ part of the army of siege, and, what was yet more valuable, General Dugommier, on this frontier. Six thousand men, detached from the army of the Western Pyrenees, arrived nearly at the same time.

Dugommier, on his arrival, found the army in a most deplorable condition ; insubordination was at its height. The troops were encamped confusedly on the heights which cover Perpignan ; and their tents, placed as chance or fancy determined, without regular allignment or intervals, gave to the whole the appearance of an encampment of Bedouin Arabs. The soldiers, discouraged by frequent checks and by the very effects of their license, were become almost as cowardly as they were disorderly ; it was not uncommon to find men amongst them, who voluntarily injured their arms to obtain a pretext for absenting themselves from engagements. The presence of their officers might have restrained them ; but these, yet more reprehensible than the soldiers, exercised no sort of superinten-

dance over them; they even slept out of the camp, and passed all their time in the town;* the great roads in the environs of the camp were choaked with the carcasses of mules and horses which had been starved to death; and which, being allowed to putrify in the open air, spread around an insupportable stench; the most disgusting filth prevailed among a soldiery abandoned to itself: these causes, combined with the heat of the climate and the effects of intemperance, conducted entire corps to the hospitals, where they generally perished from the want of proper care and assistance.

Dugommier, astonished, though not discouraged, by this mournful spectacle, undertook the difficult task of reforming these numerous disorders. To avoid the danger and contagion of example, he preserved the troops, newly arrived, distinct from the others; then, having assured himself of the co-operation of his lieutenants, he entered upon his labours. His regulations were distinguished by wisdom and

* This practice was become so habitual, that the Representatives of the People were obliged, with a view to enforce attention to professional duty, to decree the punishment of death against all delinquents.

discretion, and he was zealously supported in their execution by the generals of division Perignon, Sauret, Augereau. This last, more severe than any other in the maintenance of discipline, rapidly introduced order and subordination among the troops confided to his care. The plain of Thoulouges* was soon covered with encampments, distinguished alike by cleanliness and regularity. The arms, polished, well kept, and regularly piled in front of the tents, afforded a brilliant appearance. The demibrigades, assembled at the first signal, were exercised daily for several hours; after dinner and a short interval of rest they were led to work; they were employed in erecting entrenchments, unnecessary indeed to defend them against the Spaniards, but which kept at a distance an enemy of which they had much greater reason to be afraid, idleness. Often in the middle of the night was heard the cry "to arms!" at this signal every man was on his feet, and fell into his proper place without confusion; the generals promptly repaired to the posts assigned them. Sometimes the general made them undertake night-marches, and carried alarm into the enemy's camp.

A village two leagues distant from Perpignan.

While disorder was at its height, the soldier had become so familiarized with confinement, task-work, and the other military punishments in use; that Augereau deemed it necessary to employ one of a new description. Posts were fixed in the most conspicuous parts of the camp, to which the soldiers in fault were made fast, and for some hours abandoned to the derision of their comrades; this innovation produced a great effect; because the French, who are capable of braving the most severe punishments, cannot bear shame, nor even ridicule. These happy changes, successively introduced into all the divisions, gave to the army a new appearance; and Dugommier, beginning to acquire in his troops that confidence with which he knew so well how to inspire them, assumed a bolder attitude, and took up a position under the eyes of the Spaniards.

On viewing our camp, the Spanish general was probably struck with the same reflection which the Roman camp suggested to Pyrrhus: it is certain, that, on reconnoitring their position for the first time, when we pushed forward patrols to the very ditches of their entrenchments, the Spaniards must have been convinced, that the period of those easy successes, which

they obtained over what they deridingly called the mass, was passed.

After having re-established the discipline of the army, Dugommier thought that the moment for striking a decisive blow was arrived. The Spaniards, in possession of the whole course of the Tech,* and entrenched on the hither side of this river to the very teeth, deemed their position inattackable, and it must be confessed that it appeared impossible to force them in front. With a view to oblige them to weaken their front, Augereau was ordered to march towards the heights of Orms, where engineers had already been sent to trace roads, as if to prepare for the passage of the artillery. The enemy, who had been drawn there by these demonstrations, were, in the first instance, overthrown.† The Count de la Union, who had succeeded Ricardos in the command of the Spanish army, confined himself the first day to the sending some reinforcements, and on the morrow the action was renewed with greater

* It was on this river that Hannibal was encamped, when the Gauls appeared to dispute the passage.

† The 9th Floreal, year 2, April 29, 1794.

ardour, but always with the same success; at length, on the third day, he arrived in person, with numerous forces and the flower of his army: he fought long, with considerable valour, but he could not succeed in driving our troops from their post. While he was thus exhausting himself in vain efforts against a corps of six or seven thousand men, Dugommier, ably taking advantage of the favourable moment, forced the line of the Tech, and obtained possession of the enemy's redoubts and of all his artillery. The Spanish general made a precipitate retreat, under cover of the night, and recrossed the Pyrenees, over which we followed him almost at the same time.

The retreat of the Spaniards was so sudden, and had been so little foreseen, that they had placed no garrisons in Fort des Bains and Pratt de Molo. The general, Novera, threw himself into Colioure and Port Vendres with seven thousand men, who were made prisoners of war, at the reduction of those places.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. — BATTLE OF
THE MUGA.

WHILE the division of Sauret was charged with the siege of Colioure and Port Vendres, Perignon, posted with a part of his at La Jonquiere, formed with the remainder the blockade of Bellegarde.

Augereau, after having penetrated into Catalonia, by Saint Laurent-di-Cerda, established his division as a corps of observation on the Muga, sufficiently near the camp of Llers, to which the Spaniards had retired. They employed every effort to cause him to withdraw, and there scarcely passed a single day without a skirmish, which always terminated to our advantage.

Augereau, who was imperfectly known to this part of the army, never failed to be present at the most trifling affair of posts, and thus, by constantly exposing his person, acquired the unreserved confidence of the soldiery. The war of detail is harassing and indecisive, but it has the advantage of forming excellent troops.

The 30th Floreal,* the Spaniards made a serious attempt on the foundery of Saint Sebastian; they had already rendered themselves masters of the crest of the mountain, La Magdelaine, which commands the whole of the valley, and were extending themselves in order to envelope us, when a column of light troops fell upon their flanks and broke them. That part of their force which had penetrated beyond our positions was taken, in the number were almost all the officers of the Wallon Guards and one of their generals, the Marechal de Camp de Saint Maurin, severely wounded.

This lesson rendered the enemy more circumspect. They henceforward sought only to harass us by continual skirmishes, and to confine us in such a manner as might best preserve the country from our incursions; twice they

* The 19th of May.

established with this view an entrenched camp on the heights of l'Etoile; twice Augereau dispossessed them by a night-attack; and not only did he fatigue the enemy by constant alarms, but he despatched parties in all directions to procure forage and subsistence, which are scarce in that part of Lampourdan; and, at the same time, to intercept the convoys which the enemy might draw from Vieq and Campredon. A detachment of his division was sent to the assistance of General Doppet, and enabled him to obtain possession of the last-mentioned town.* His troops, always in movement, accustomed themselves insensibly to brave all dangers and all fatigues.

The position of the division of Augereau was singular. The valley through which the Muga flows is extremely deep, and surrounded with high mountains, which, in that part, formed a sort of bason: it was in the bottom of this bason that our camp was placed. Two principal passes might conduct us to the enemy, and reciprocally conduct the enemy to us. Two

* Want of room, and the very nature of this work, obliges me to pass over many military actions alike curious and instructive.

brigades were placed behind these outlets; the other lateral issues were defended by a corps of light troops, which also watched over our rear, while a post of communication was established at the village of Darnious and occupied by a single battalion.*

Colioure and Port Vendres were in the power of the French, but Bellegarde still held out. The Spaniards, who had several times endeavoured to introduce succours and supplies into the place, at length determined to try the fate of a general action. They felt, that, if they succeeded in forcing our corps of observation and afterwards marched straight for the Col de Porteills, they would not only succeed in raising the blockade, but would cut off the greater part of the army; a corps of twenty-two thousand men† was, in consequence, charged with this service, while other troops presented themselves before our centre and on our left, to cause diversions and to prevent succours from being sent to the corps, which

* An inspection of the map will prove that this division was absolutely insulated and abandoned to its own strength.

† The Spanish Gazettes enumerated this corps at twenty thousand men.

was immediately the object of the enemy's attack.

The attack commenced the 26th Thermidor,* at two o'clock in the morning. The first posts were obliged to yield to the superiority of numbers. Augereau, taking advantage of the topography of the ground, allowed the enemy to engage himself in the narrowest part of the defile, and kept them in this unfavourable situation a great part of the day, while with the half of his troops he dispersed two columns, one of which was advancing on his right flank by the pass at Albanias, the other on his rear by the chapel of Saint George. No sooner had he freed himself from them, than he caused a movement to be executed by his left, on the village of Serrades: the enemy, imagining that these were fresh troops, and finding themselves in danger of being attacked in rear, retreated in good order, leaving three thousand dead on the field of battle. The action, which ended only at six o'clock at night, had lasted sixteen hours. The defence made by the division of Augereau was the more surprising, as it did not consist of more than seven thou-

* The 13th of August.

sand men, and a circumstance not less extraordinary is, that the action was fought in the absence of the commander-in-chief, who was at Bagnols, eight leagues from the field of battle.

The ill success of this enterprize deprived the garrison of Bellegarde of all hope of succour, and it was soon after forced to capitulate.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.—BATTLE OF
LA MAGDELENA.

AFTER the battle of Muga, Dugommier took the wise precaution of contracting his line. He caused Augereau's division to take, in front of the village of Darnious, an excellent position, which not only better covered the blockade, but easily maintained the communication between the different divisions. The Spaniards, who were perhaps deceived as to the real intention of this movement,* encamped

* I have had in hand, for a considerable time, a very curious correspondence between M. de Courten and the Prince of Castelfranco, Lieutenant-Generals in the service of His Catholic Majesty. It appears that the latter penetrated into our designs.

on the summit of the mountain of La Magdalena, and established batteries along the whole right bank of the Muga; we ourselves had some on the left bank, so that the respective posts were within hearing, which gave rise to frequent firing of cannon and musketry. The Spaniards never failed to provoke our soldiery by insults; and, in a tone of irony, conformable to their natural arrogance, they often dared us to come to Figuières. They little imagined that we were on the point of rendering ourselves masters of it.

The ease with which we had rendered ourselves masters of the entrenched lines on the Tech did not cure the Spaniards of their predilection for field-fortifications, and they again buried themselves in earth, in front of Figuières. Their line extended from the sea to Saint Sebastian de la Muga; Roses forming the appui of their right, and the mountains that of their left. The whole extent of their front was covered with a triple line of redoubts, and redoubts too of the most formidable description, absolute forts; fraised, palisaded, provided with heavy artillery, and crossing their fires in every direction. Behind this line stood the camp of Llers, protected by the citadel of Figuières. Under the shelter of so many pre-

cautions, the Spanish army deemed itself invincible, but those very precautions occasioned its ruin.

Dugommier, who was rendered easy with respect to our communications by the surrender of Bellegarde, resolved to attack the enemy; he refused the left and the centre, as he had done at the battle of the Lech, to be enabled to act with greater effect on the right. The French army did not amount to quite thirty thousand men, while the Spanish army comprised forty-two thousand.* If we had simultaneously attacked the whole front of the enemy, we should probably have been repulsed with loss at all points. Augereau was therefore ordered to pass the Muga, and to endeavour to outflank the enemy's left. This movement was extremely difficult. It was necessary to pass the river in view of the Spaniards, and afterwards to clamber up the high mountain of La Magdalena, under fire of their batteries. Augereau regulated the march of his troops in the following manner: three thousand men were ordered to put themselves in march

* I have seen the distribution, in the papers found on the Count of La Union.

from the camp at Costouges,* the 26th Brumaire,† at four o'clock in the evening, and to push forward to the village of Terrades, passing through Saint Laurent de la Muga; he left, in his camp at Darnious, about two thousand men, with orders to fix the attention of the enemy by an incessant fire of artillery and small arms; and at midnight he put himself in motion at the head of five thousand men.‡ A

* A village near Saint Laurent di Cerda. The march of this column had been calculated at sixteen hours, but it occupied eighteen hours, owing to obstacles for which a sufficient allowance had not been made. Had the column arrived a little sooner, the retreat of the Spaniards would have been cut off.

† 16th of November, 1794.

‡ Augereau, somewhat at a loss to find guides capable of conducting his column through the bye roads, which he meant to take, in order to conceal his march from the enemy, sent for the chief of the 39th demibrigade, Bellet, an officer of the highest promise, since killed, with a standard in his hand, at the attack of the entrenched camp of Ceva, to the lasting regret of his commanders and of his comrades. "Have you not," said he to him, "some determined marauders in your corps?"—"I should hope not," replied the colonel, who expected a reprimand. The general explained to him his intentions; and Bellet, in consequence, brought him three confirmed pickles. "Are you acquainted with a road, by which we may get to the river without meeting with the Spanish

party of the enemy, posted on the bridge of La Muga, were made prisoners; and, at the break of day, Augereau found himself on the summit of La Magdalena. The enemy, perceiving that his entrenchments were thus become useless, made but a slight resistance, and abandoned to us his camp and his artillery.*

posts?" "yes, general!" "Do you think we could, without burning priming, secure the post on the bridge?" "without the smallest difficulty". "Will you undertake it?" "very willingly." "Do you speak Spanish?" "enough to answer the sentinel." "Tis well." These men led the column and kept their word.

* A corps of one thousand two hundred men, posted on the heights of the foundry of Saint Sebastian and commanded by M. de Crillon, (son of the duke of that name,) the worthy heir of the valour of his ancestors, was the only one from which we experienced resistance, and it dared to dispute the victory for a considerable time after the retreat of the other troops: but, by a singular fatality, the Spaniards, who could not conceive how we had succeeded in outflanking them, without being stopped by this advanced corps, concluded that it had abandoned its post, and the only troops who had done their duty on this day were unworthily calumniated. The conqueror of Mahon, in despair at the injurious reports respecting his son, was consoled only on hearing the distinguished treatment which his valour had procured him on the part of the French, excellent judges in this matter; and he expressed his joy in a letter, as dignified as it was affecting, which appeared at the time.

Dugommier, who was making his observations from a height which we called the black mountain, was making dispositions to profit of the favourable moment by bringing the left and centre into action, when a howitzer-shell struck him dead upon the spot. This unhappy event put a stop to the action; Augereau established himself on the heights of which he had obtained possession; the rest of the army remained in the situations they occupied before the battle.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. — BATTLE
OF LLERS.

THE death of General Dugommier having spread consternation among his troops, the representatives of the people addressed to them a proclamation, which was inserted in daily orders, and entrusted General Perignon provisionally with the command; he immediately assembled a council of war, in which it was determined to attack the enemy anew, on the 30th,* that is to say on the day after the morrow.

General Perignon might have been jealous of the honour with which Augereau had covered himself; but, far from yielding to so base

* The 20th of November.

and unworthy a sentiment, he afforded to his rival new means of augmenting his reputation: he reinforced his division with new troops drawn from the other two, and charged it with the principal attack; convinced, at the same time, of the wisdom of the dispositions made by his predecessor, he suffered the original order of battle to remain unaltered.

I am at a loss to conceive why the Spaniards, whose left was altogether in air, did not take advantage of the two days respite which was granted to them, either to make an effort on our right, with a view to drive us back into our original position, or to withdraw into their entrenched camp of Llers.

Whatever their aim might be, they persisted in remaining in their redoubts; they were attacked in them the 30th Brumaire,* and displayed extreme intrepidity: but no sooner was the line forced than all resistance ceased. The Count of La Union in vain performed prodigies of valour, in vain he endeavoured to rally troops, accustomed to fight only behind entrenchments; he found it impossible to stop the runaways, even at the camp of Llers, which nature and art had combined to strengthen.

The 20th of November.

M. 2

At length, this courageous Castilian, unwilling to survive the shame of his defeat, fell, at the head of a handful of brave men, who, like him, had devoted themselves to death.

The fruits of this victory were immense. All the tents, baggage, an enormous quantity of arms and military stores, and two hundred and twenty-two pieces of brass artillery with their tumbrils, fell into our hands.

The Spanish army, under the influence of terror, fled with the utmost precipitation. Ten thousand men of different regiments took refuge, pêle mêle, in the fortress of Figuières, and were some days after made prisoners of war: the remainder spread themselves over the interior of Catalonia, and it required two months to rally them, on the other side of the Fluvia.*

* The author deems it right here to conclude this sketch; he may, at a future period, offer to the public a complete history of the army of the Southern Pyrenees. The remains of this brave army passed into Italy after the signature of the treaty of Basle. It has given birth to a great number of distinguished officers, who have fallen or covered themselves with glory on this new stage. Among the number are, Auge-reau, Perignon, Sauret, Lannes, Victor, Lanusse, Bessiere, Lagrange, Bon, Verdier, Duphot, Dugua, Sanson, Causse, Bannel, Beyraud, Pourailly, Cafarelli, Frère.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED. —

REFLECTION.

IF from this narrative my readers conceive a high opinion of the valour of the army of the Southern Pyrenees, they will but render that army justice; but, if they should be induced, from the same cause, to tax the Spanish nation with cowardice, they would fall into a gross error, which I feel an interest in counteracting. I declare, with perfect truth, that I am not acquainted with men more patient, more sober, better disciplined, or more steady in action, than the Spanish soldiery: to these valuable qualities they unite a high feeling of national pride, and a love of glory which borders on enthusiasm. What do they then require to re-become one of the first people in Europe?

nothing but a better military system.* Their misfortunes, in the last war, flowed from the excessive confidence which they placed in their artillery, their lines, and their endless fortifications, a confidence with which it will be always dangerous to inspire troops; because, by persuading them that they are equal to every thing by the aid of these factitious means, it will lead them to conclude that they must fail in every thing when deprived of them. How unreasonable, too, is it to expect, that an army, broken into small fractions along the whole front of its line of battle, immoveable in its positions, constrained in all its movements, can combat with advantage against a general who is in any degree a tactitian. Is it not evident, that, however strong a line be, it must eventually be penetrated in some part, and that in that case there is no alternative but that of flight. It was, doubtlessly, reasoning on the hypothesis of a similar situation, that it has been maintained, that an army whose flank was turned must necessarily be beaten. But this maxim, of which I have already proved the fallacy, and which might have been true sixty years

* Perhaps, too, a more enlightened government.

ago, should not be allowed to operate, since the art of war consists infinitely more in activity of movement than in choice of ground, rather in impulsive valour than in inert courage, and since, in fine, it has been proved, that there is no position which in itself is good or bad to a skilful tactician.*

Must not he have been fully convinced of this truth, who, when asked, before the battle of Castiglione, what appui he would give to his flanks, replied, "cannon shall form the appui of my right, bayonets the appui of my left."†

* A position is not good or bad solely in its own nature, but according to the use which is made of it. Marginal note by General Jarry.

† In the original. *J'appuyeraï ma droite avec du canon, et ma gauche avec des bayonnettes.*

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF THE CAUSES OF OUR SUPERIORITY DURING
THE LATE WARS.

THE talents or the mistakes of the generals engaged, the gain or the loss of some battles, are causes not sufficiently comprehensive to account for the superiority which we have invariably maintained, and which has been peculiarly manifested in the most momentous periods.

The Romans have been often beaten, but the loss of a battle only rendered them more imperious, more fierce, more intractable. Their leading maxim was always to confer and never to receive peace. They caused so much damage to their enemies, that the fear of reprisals dictated the necessity of overcoming them. What

this people derived from the spirit of its institutions has been with us the effect of circumstances. The folly of our enemies placed us, in the beginning of the war, in the same situation as the Romans. We had no alternative between victory and political annihilation.

In those wars without character, in the time of our kings, the desire of peace was announced at the very commencement of hostilities, the views of both parties were known, and battles scarcely interrupted negotiations. Such wars resembled those duels which are undertaken without personal hatred, and only to maintain appearances, in which the opponents are alike disposed to reconciliation. In the wars of the revolution, it was felt either that we must renounce all hope of peace or put ourselves in a situation to dictate it; they may be compared to those combats, described by the poets, which, opened by reciprocal provocations and insults, rendered all accommodation shameful, and consequently impossible.

If, on entering France, the confederates had shewn moderation and announced pacific intentions, they would better have served the cause which they affected to support; but, in the delirium of their first successes, they dared to speak the language of masters, and the sole

effect of their arrogance was to revolt all hearts. The insolent manifestoes of the Duke of Brunswick completed the measure of the indignation of a people which might have been cajoled into wearing chains, disguised under an agreeable aspect, but which, replete with honour, shudders at the idea of contempt. Impelled by indignation, it abandoned itself to the conduct of some revolutionary incendiaries, who promised to satiate its vengeance. These adroit tyrants hastened to associate the nation to their crimes, and thus gave to the war all the fury of individual passions. Each Frenchman felt the insult offered to the country as if it had been directed against himself. Vainly did the politicians of Europe presage the termination of our empire, and menace us with the lot of Poland; all their calculations were upset by the energy of a government, which held at its uncontrouled disposal the passions of a mighty people. Victory on this occasion was to be the portion, not of the most rich, but of the most persevering and courageous.*

* Nothing better characterizes the spirit of the age than the well-known adage: "The victory must be his, who shall have the last crown." Opulent nations! modern nations! was such

Far from palliating or suppressing our defeats, government every where bruited them,* and they had no other effect than to augment the general enthusiasm; each man flew to arms, and disputed with his neighbour the honour of first marching against the common enemy. The entire nation was animated by one common sentiment, by one common wish, that of punishing the aggression of what were called the confederated tyrants; influenced by this leading principle her attention was the less alive to intestine commotions; and thus it was, that, while she was contending for liberty, she allowed to consolidate itself in her very bosom the most odious

the opinion of those people who have left behind them such glorious recollections? Be less vain of your gold; virtue, courage, and honour, are the only treasures which it is impossible to exhaust.

* I confess that I do not admire that narrow policy which induces almost all governments to dissemble their losses. For whom is the misrepresentation intended? strangers are never duped by it, and its effect is equally lost on the people of the country. The imagination takes alarm at the appearance of mystery and always outstrips the truth. A frank avowal, on the contrary, announces a government confiding in its powers, and it is sufficient to shew calmness and assurance to a people to inspire them with like feelings.

tyranny which ever yet weighed upon the human race.

The war, having become wholly national, assumed a character of the most frightful inveteracy. The horrors of winter were no longer able to suspend the course of its frightful tragedies, which threatened to swallow up the whole living generations. The troops, half-naked, ill-fed, not paid, braved, with the most inflexible courage, the agonies of want and the fury of the seasons. Freed from that train of baggage, which formerly clogged all their movements, they moved with a celerity which is scarcely conceivable. The use of tents in encampments was abandoned, the soldiers learned to forego blankets and straw, and thousands of bat-horses were thus rendered unnecessary. The officers, having neither horses or servants, marched on foot, carrying, like the privates, their knapsacks on their backs. Always in the open air, always in movement, the troops became day by day more hardy, and were, at length, almost indefatigable.* Desertion, that

* It would be erroneous to suppose, that this kind of life was prejudicial to the health of the soldiery. The sudden transitions from heat to cold, from moist to dry, from extreme

bane of modern armies, was almost unknown. In fine, if we astonished Europe, it was by the display of a virtue, which less than any other we were supposed to possess, by a constancy not to be shaken by misfortune.

It will be felt, that with such an army generals were equal to any enterprize, and that, maugre the fickleness of fortune and the various chances of war, the French were at the long run secure of victory.

repose to extreme fatigue, these are the causes which destroy mankind in general. The savages, who live constantly in the open air, are little subject to illness, while sedentary people, people who live in towns, fall a prey to numberless disorders, the very names of which are unknown to labourers.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OF DISCIPLINE.

WHAT a singular aggrégation does an army at first sight appear to be! what disparity of manners, tastes, habits, prejudices, language, is to be found among the men composing these heterogeneous masses! where then is the amalgamating power which is capable of acting with sufficient energy on elements so various and so discordant? this power is happily known; it is discipline: by it so many different dispositions are made to concur to one end, to receive one impulse, and to conform to one will; it is that admirable principle, in fine, which communicates organization, movement, life, and, if I dare say so, thought, to masses inert in their nature, and which, without this vivifying essence, would quickly fall into dissolution.

"Without discipline no army."* The truth of this popular adage is incessantly confirmed by experience, and, in this respect, as in many others, the Romans offer models, which to be equalled must be imitated.

Nothing can supply a want of courage; but discipline will almost always give birth to courage, by the confidence with which it inspires troops. Take away order and discipline, on the contrary, and valour becomes a very imperfect quality. The reason is simple; in a multitude of brave men, who rush into action without order, movements are always unconnected, and personal courage is exhausted in vain, because individual efforts; the property of discipline, on the contrary, is to oppose the strong to the weak, and to multiply the force of each by the force of all.

The Romans were opposed to nations on whom nature had bestowed strength and courage, and they triumphed over them only by dint of order and discipline. The imagination, impressed with their mighty achievements, depicts them as men of towering stature, and our painters, participating in the general er-

* "Sans discipline point d'armée."

ror, bestow on them in their paintings forms absolutely colossal, which, at the same time, astonish and humble us. But in truth the Romans were under the middle size, and differed from the inhabitants of modern Rome only in consequence of the excellence of their institutions. Cæsar informs us, that the Gauls, proud of their strength and their high stature, at first looked upon them with disdain, but the impetuous valour of our rude ancestors failed in making any impression on the intrepid firmness of that enemy, which they had accused of weakness.

Whenever the republic was esteemed to be in danger, the reins of discipline were drawn closer. Before Marius led the troops against the Cimbri, he employed them in turning the course of rivers. In the war against Jugurtha, the same Marius established a discipline so rigid that he was enabled to enrol, without fear, the lowest and most abandoned populace;* and the same causes emboldened the great king of Prussia to confide the defence of his crown

* Be it remembered, that I consider this innovation simply in a military point of view, and not with relation to its political effects.

to a vile assemblage of deserters and mercenaries.

With thirty thousand disciplined Macedonians, Alexander subjugated Asia; while six millions of Europeans, who, towards the close of the tenth century, armed themselves for the conquest of Palestine, perished without effecting their object. Since the expedition of Xerxes, history does not offer a more striking example of the effects of indiscipline. The French troops have never possessed the reputation of exact subordination, and could it reasonably be expected from them, when their officers deemed themselves enfranchised from every obligation except that of fighting? besides, the manner in which the armies were recruited, during the latter years of the monarchy, had the effect of collecting for the most part young men, ruined by debt and debauchery, who considered military service as the sponge which was to obliterate their excesses, and as a secure asylum from which they might brave the animadversions of their friends. It is not surprising that the amalgamation of such vitious elements produced a very unsatisfactory and imperfect composition.

The defective organization of the army and the extreme relaxation of discipline were cer-

tainly among the principal causes which operated to the fall of the crown, and the revolution completed the work of insubordination. Men in delirium, and for whose absurd system it is difficult to find an appellation, required at the same time victories and an excessive licence. While a terrible responsibility rested on the heads of the generals, the troops were encouraged in resisting their authority. Disobedience and mutiny were inculcated, and practised with impunity in the very bosom of the army. Our first reverses, instead of being traced to this obvious cause, furnished matter of accusation against the generals, who perished victims to popular clamour. The return to order appeared impossible; when it was discovered in a quarter where it was least expected. The disposition of the old regiments was absolutely ruined; the battalions of volunteers were the reformers of the army.

At the time of the formation of these battalions, the greatest degree of enthusiasm was manifested in the towns: but this effervescence was of short duration. Mutinies, insurrections, denunciations, were so frequent, that our camps would have become absolute hotbeds of sedition, if the spirit of the factious had not been coun-

teracted by their own want of concert and by the fatigues of war. The people of the country, more cold, less sanguine, and infinitely less boastful, than those of the towns, and above all of large towns, quitted their native acres, not without great reluctance; but, after having passed some months under the standards of their country, they became models of conduct and courage. Naturally patient and robust, they gave to our armies a new character. Hence, independently of other causes, sprang that spirit of tenacity and fortitude to which I have already adverted, and which has never since quitted us. Experience, the habit of command, more attention to the conduct and choice of officers, completed the work of reform; and, at the moment I write, the discipline of the army may be considered as nearly perfect. If any thing can henceforth relax it, it will be the leisure of our soldiers and officers during peace; idleness is, I cannot too often repeat, the rock on which all military virtues founder. I remember to have remarked, that at the time indiscipline was at its height in the rest of the army, the corps of artillery was distinguished not only by a stricter subordination, but by morals more regular and a

sort of dignity in social intercourse. How is this fact to be accounted for, except upon the ground of the active and studious life which artillery-men always lead?

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

A very minute discipline is not calculated for our troops. The system at present in force is highly rational: while it relaxes on some forms of mere etiquette, it is become severe in enforcing attention to essentials. M. de St. Germain was actuated by excellent motives; but, having passed some time in the service of Austria, he had imbibed principles too much in opposition with our ideas; he endeavoured to introduce into the army spies, and blows from the flat of the sabre, that is to say, to deprive us of those qualities by which we are distinguished; fidelity and a delicate sense of honour: happily he failed.

A German prefers twenty blows from a cane to one hour's confinement. To a Frenchman,

death itself would be preferable to such treatment. In vain, in the preamble to the regulations of 1776, was urged the example of the most celebrated nations, and the pernicious effects which imprisonment had on the health of the soldiery, nothing could make them digest the insult of a punishment, which they persisted in regarding as ignominious. Ill betide the man who shall succeed in erasing from our bosoms that powerful principle, honour!

In general, our nation requires a light hand. We have been compared to the Athenians, but I am convinced that the harsh laws of Draco were calculated yet less for us than for that amiable people.

Those who have accused the French of frivolity have never known them; or, at least, their observation must have been formed on that class of courtiers and idlers who resemble each other in all countries and at all times. When Sterne compared us to pieces of money, the impression of which is worn away by long friction, he certainly struck out a very ingenious device, but who will suppose that he fancied that it characterised the nation? Our own writers, long under the influence of the Anglomania, have calumniated us yet more than strangers, because they have portrayed only

the follies and the vices of the least useful, and happily also the least numerous, portion of society. I assert, that an Englishman is rather proud than great, rather ostentatious than generous, and that he esteems a want of politeness to be a proof of superiority. A Spaniard supposes that to live nobly it is only necessary to live idly, he confounds indolence with dignity, and gloomy haughtiness with proper pride. The French alone know how to reconcile what they owe to others with what they owe to themselves. Their delicate comprehension of what is proper ever preserves them from error in this respect. Our soldiers, for instance; will render the proper salute with their arms to an ensign as scrupulously as to a general; but, if they do not respect their colonel, they will, when off duty, scarcely deign to look at him. The regulations formerly directed, that a soldier, when he met an officer, was to halt, and, placing himself in a military attitude, to carry his right hand to his hat; the extreme care with which this humiliating constraint was avoided may yet be recollected. The soldiers, as soon as they perceived an officer, went out of his way, or concealed themselves, at the risk of being confined.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

OF MILITARY CONSCRIPTION.

IN legislation, ideas are occasionally introduced, the utility of which at once strikes all understandings; such is the law of military conscription. All those, who have, for the last century, agitated questions of national policy, have admitted, that every member of a society contracted the obligation of devoting himself to the defence of the common safety; but it remained to the present day to apply this luminous maxim, which, indeed, could not have been acted upon in the times of the monarchy. Such a measure appears to be in contradiction with the principles of a monarchical government; and the permanence of modern armies, which has made of the military an exclusive

profession, was farther calculated to render it abortive.

The Athenians and Spartans were obliged to serve; these from the age of eighteen, those from the age of twenty, until sixty; and, in the times of the republic, no Roman could attain to public offices or honours, who had not served ten years between the age of sixteen and forty-seven. Among these nations, the law confided the care of defending the country only to men who possessed some property,* but when, under Augustus, there remained of the republic only an empty name and some outward forms, the system of recruiting became equally degraded with the constitution of the state; the permanence of the army established itself, or, in the language of Montesquieu, the legions became perpetual. Towards the decline of the empire, the Roman armies became filled with Goths, Huns, Vandals, Illyrians, Pannonians, Gauls, which that degenerate people took into pay.

* According to Dionysius, Halicarnassus, the Roman soldier, possessed nine hundred French livres, (about thirty-seven pounds ten shillings sterling,) a considerable sum in those days, when one ounce of silver was equivalent to seventy pounds weight of brass.

The foundation of the republic has, with us, placed military conscription in harmony with the general spirit of our laws, but the progress of industry and commerce, which has given rise to a multitude of sedentary professions which require a man's whole life, the extent and numerous population of the empire, rendered it expedient that every citizen should not be rigorously obliged to become a soldier. It became, then, necessary to modify the law, and to adapt it to existing customs, or at once to renounce all the advantages arising from commerce and national industry; this sacrifice would either have made us tributary to our neighbours, or rendered necessary, as was the case with the Romans, a state of perpetual war, to enable us to invade them, and to supply our wants at their expense.

It has, then, been wisely determined, that each citizen shall be required to serve for not more than five years, a term too short to preclude him from the ultimate exercise of any profession. Twenty years is the age at which he is liable to be called upon, because, at that age, the education is completed, and the body, having taken its set, becomes capable of supporting the fatigues of war; in fine, a pecuniary sacrifice is admitted as a commutation for

military service, to enable those who are destined for commerce, for the bar, or other professions which require all their time, to pursue them without interruption, at the same time that the sum required for this indulgence is not sufficiently great seriously to incommode them. With these modifications, conscription has become naturalized amongst us without effort, and may be considered as the fundamental law and palladium of the state.

While this law was in agitation. I was struck with an idea which was communicated to some of those who were employed in framing it. I thought that the difficulties in the way of its execution would be considerably diminished by assigning each department to one or more corps, as the ground from which those corps were exclusively to recruit, and I wished that the corps, whether cavalry or infantry, should bear the names of their respective departments. These were my motives.

I had remarked, and it has, doubtless, been remarked by many others, that, under the old government, men of the same province preferred to enlist in the regiments which bore its name. Thus the people of Picardy sought the regiment of Picardy; those of Languedoc

the regiment of Languedoc; those of Flanders the regiment of Flanders.*

The recruits formed with the greater alacrity, as they were sure to meet, in their regiments, their neighbours, their relations, their friends, the companions of their childhood. Man does not quit, for the first time, his paternal roof without keen regret; but, when he meets at a distance the same sports, the same customs, the same dialect, he again fancies himself in the bosom of his family, and his life acquires charms which chase away all regrets, and render his country yet more dear.† To such a man,

* Whoever has travelled must have felt the force of these observations.

† It is known that similar reflections actuated Mr. Pitt, in the formation of what has been called the Parish-bill. But, perhaps, that statesman did not make due allowance for the effects which our colonial service was likely to have on such a system of recruiting. Many a regiment has left the shores of Britain, recruited with the flower of its youth, and within twenty-four months returned a melancholy spectacle of the deadly influence of a tropical sun. Could men, who had lately lost friends, brothers, kinsmen, in one common ruin, be expected to display any anxiety to take service in a corps which had proved the grave of all they held dear? This case is much more likely to occur than that put by the author, of

his corps became a second home, its reputation was indented with his own, and this sentiment gave rise to that regimental feeling* which amply compensated for the private quarrels which it engendered by the great achievements to which it gave rise; in a word, the soldier, imagining himself to be constantly under the eye of his countrymen, of his relations, of his mistress, exerted himself to avoid committing any act which should force him to blush in their presence, when the expiration of his service left him at liberty to return to his home.

I have been assured, that the only reason which caused this project to be rejected was, that, if a corps happened to be annihilated in action, such an event must fill the department from which it was recruited with desolation. This objection occurred to myself; but, on ex-

the annihilation of a regiment by the chance of war, and it is unaccompanied by those consolations which are never wanting to the friends of those who die the death of the brave.

The feelings, on which the author dwells, may, however, be successfully called into play in the raising of corps, and, indeed, have been so, in Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland. — TRANSLATOR.

* *Esprit de corps.*

amination, I deemed it rather specious than solid.

Is it not true that the only districts ravaged in a war are those in the neighbourhood of the seat of operations? in that case, how does a good government conduct itself? it remits all taxes to the inhabitants of the suffering provinces, and in a few years the wounds of war become cicatrized. Let us apply corresponding measures to the departments whose regiments shall have most suffered, let them for some time be dispensed from furnishing their quota of men, and we shall obtain the same results. The greater part of the states of Italy and Greece were not more extensive than our departments; yet these states had armies, they waged wars, and alone supported their pressure. I am unable to discover that their population materially suffered in consequence; besides, this objection is founded on an hypothesis, a solitary and uncertain fact, an exception, in a word; and I have never thought that rules should be deduced from exceptions. It will surely be admitted that few wars have been so long, so obstinate, so fertile in events, as the last, and yet I do not remember a single example of the misfortune alluded to.

I also proposed to establish a direct correspondence between the boards of administration of the several corps* and the civil authorities of the departments; to leave an officer constantly near these last, to superintend the levy and march of the conscripts. These accessory measures have been since adopted, but the principal is still left in oblivion. I persist in again bringing it forward, because I persist in thinking it useful.

* "Les conseils d'administration des corps," in the original, a phrase which I confess I do not exactly comprehend, as I am ignorant of the existence of such tribunals; they are again adverted to in the latter part of the fortieth chapter. — TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ON THE CELIBACY OF THE TROOPS.

IF the celibacy of the troops be an evil, it is, notwithstanding, unavoidable. A married soldier cannot be a good soldier.

I am at a loss to conceive what those propose who would have soldiers to marry. One of two things must happen, either the wives of military men must accompany them in their campaigns or they must remain at home. In common candour, is this second army of Amazons admissible? and, if the women remain behind, and the war be of long duration, what becomes of propagation? How are these women to subsist? at the expense of the state? for there are few, if any, soldiers able to maintain a wife. Let us then abandon so idle a reverie.

In my opinion, the law of conscription has reconciled every thing. Surely a man, who enters the service at the age of twenty and quits it before the age of thirty, is still perfectly fit for marriage and likely to give children to the state.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IS IT EXPEDIENT TO EMPLOY TROOPS ON
PUBLIC WORKS?

In the course of this work, I have dwelt so often on the mischiefs to be apprehended from the idleness of military men, that this question may almost be considered as already answered.

The politician and the philosopher have long sighed over the loss which agriculture and industry have sustained by the deprivation of so many hands; they will be rendered back, if the soldiery are employed in forming ports, harbours, canals, and in repairing the roads of the empire. These ideas are not new, I am aware, but why should I cease to repeat what should never cease to be repeated? Is it my fault if things the most simple and the most easy appear impracticable?

The pickaxe and the spade were as familiar to the Roman soldier as the javelin and the sword. Nature has formed us more vigorous than the Romans; why should we allow custom to sink us below them?

Employment is so necessary to man, that the most wretched are to be found amongst those who are utterly without it. Disgust on the part of the troops, then, is not to be apprehended, only equity demands, that, when they are employed in works, they should receive the same emolument which civilians would earn in a like situation.*

In war the case is different; if soldiers are made to dig the earth, it is in the course of service, and, consequently, forms part of their engagements: for this they can claim no pecuniary recompence.

* These ideas have been lately adopted in Austria. The emperor has ordained, at the instance of the Archduke Charles, that all the men of the army, who can be spared from military duty, shall be employed in different works; such as the construction and repair of bridges, roads, public edifices, &c. in which case they are to be paid as other labourers.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

OF MILITARY PROMOTION AND REWARDS.

IN those dreadful times, in which France groaned under the most atrocious tyranny ever recorded in the annals of mankind, revolutionary phrenzy was carried to the length of forming in the army a club of demagogues. The soldiers had the right of naming their officers, and almost that of sitting in judgment on them;* it was, if I may so say, anarchy in anarchy.

* As soon as a representative of the people arrived at the army he used to address the soldiery in nearly the following terms: "Comrades! if there are among you any traitors denounce them to me; if your generals or your officers are unjust or oppressive denounce them to me; if they leave you in want of any thing denounce them to me;" in other words, "do you desire to see your officers die and to supply their place? speak."

The representatives of the people, delegated to the armies, overturned all arrangements and cashiered or brought to the scaffold generals on the slightest pretexts; but it was chiefly in making numerous promotions that they delighted in manifesting their power. It has been said, that Caligula was possessed by the strange whim of conferring on his horse the second dignity in the empire: little has been wanting to offer to the present times an example of similar folly. The contagion, continuing to spread, multiplied the general and staff officers in an incredible degree.* In the crowd have been found some men who have done honour to their country; unhappily, the greater number have caused us to blush for their ignorance and their vices: our countrymen are diverted at the recital of their follies and of their ridiculous mistakes, but they would weep if it were in their nature to weep. The mischief which these men have

* Philip used to say; "I envy the good fortune of the Athenians, they find every year ten men capable of commanding their armies, while I have hitherto found only Parmenion to whom I can venture to entrust mine."

If Philip had lived in our times, what, good heavens! would he not have said.

occasioned with their mustachios and their enormous sabres is incalculable.

Under the Directory, promotions were less frequent; but this weak government, which has never extended its authority over more than a part of the nation, because that authority was founded only on a spirit of party,* and which, in lieu of containing all factions by the wholesome restraint of the laws, abandoned those laws to the caprice of faction; this degraded government was obliged to pay by favours, which in this case are always marked by injustice, for the support which some military men afforded to its versatile measures. Hence it happened, that all those, who, from their malversations, their incapacity, or their misconduct, had been deprived of their situations, hastened to Paris from the four corners of the empire. There, like those birds of prey which a voracious instinct urges to follow the track of an enemy, in the view of gorging on the carcases which it shall leave behind, these men watched the course of

* Ill betide the government which favours exclusively one faction! it will be soon reduced to become the passive instrument of that faction's views.

events, and founded all their hopes on public calamities. Soon as they foresaw the approach of a great state-explosion, which was to change the face of parties, they quickly assumed the colours of the moment, and thus ensured their own re-establishment; often they by these means obtained promotion, and returned, glorying in their hateful successes, to disgust the most meritorious officers of the army.

Bonaparte, at length, appeared to dissipate these abuses; with a firm hand he rooted out the weeds, and promotion became less frequent and less easy: to obtain a step it became necessary really to deserve it. Under his government, at once equitable and vigorous, scarcely an instance is to be found of a promotion due to partiality or to intrigue.

A circumstance, of which we have yet made no mention, and which, before Bonaparte, tended considerably to augment the number of officers, was, that no other mode of recompensing military merit had been imagined than an advance of rank. Now, many a man is personally very brave who is yet utterly incapable of directing the bravery of others; to entrust such a man with command is to hazard very unjustifiably his reputation and the fate of the men who are entrusted to his conduct.

It became, then, necessary to create a new coin, which, at the same time, that it encouraged heroic actions, entailed no burden on the state. The sabres, fusils, and grenades, of honour, have answered this end. In their institution, the legislator has had in view the two most active passions of the human heart; interest, and the love of distinction.

This admirable expedient, at the same time that it established a sort of gradation in the distribution of military rewards, has afforded to government the power of calling to exalted posts only men of a superior stamp. Much, however, is yet wanting to bring the regulations, which relate to promotion, to the degree of perfection of which I believe them susceptible. Bonaparte is certainly justified in supposing that his selections will ever be in strict accord with justice; his acknowledged discernment must remove all doubt on that head; but, the more his superiority is striking and pre-eminent, the less can it be expected to fall to the lot of his successors; and his duty, I will venture to add, is to extend his solicitude beyond the present generation.

I certainly do not wish that government should ever divest itself of the useful and essential prerogative of conferring military em-

ployments, but I would that it were convinced, that it cannot of itself see all nor perform all; and that, spite of its endeavours, a multitude of intermediate objects will always interpose between it and the truth. Can it be expected, amid a crowd of suitors, equally armed with certificates and recommendatory letters, to discern real merit? The adroit, supple, persevering, intriguer is more than any other likely to collect an imposing collection of testimonials. This man protects him from complaisance, from weakness; that from secret motives; all to get rid of his importunities.

If the deserving man, on the contrary, experiences difficulty in furthering his views, it is because he is too proud to descend to humiliating solicitations, and too modest not to be timid. The ambitious, who consider probity as an obstacle in their designs, far from assisting, oppose him. Little minds expect him to cringe and to fawn. As he cannot submit to the pretensions of these, and will not assist the projects of those, it is almost impossible that he should rise.

It appears to me, then, to be desirable, that promotion should be subjected to fixed rules, and that government should make a point of conforming to them, reserving, nevertheless, a

certain number of nominations; for it could not, without impolicy and injustice, preclude itself from the power of rapidly carrying to high command those who manifest superior or early genius. These cases excepted, it would be well if a military man knew the conditions on which his advancement depended, and there can be no doubt that he would then exert himself to fulfil them. Nevertheless, to prevent him from forgetting that the military is and must be a dependent profession, government should always remain the judge of his ulterior conduct, and would preserve the right of cashiering him at pleasure, without being necessitated to assign its motives.

CHAPTER XL.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

IT has often been proposed to subject military men to an examination, previous to their acquiring a new step; I look upon this as an excellent measure: the great difficulty would be in the choice and composition of the examining jury. Hitherto, government has been obliged to rely on the opinions of general officers: all have not equally merited this confidence. The partiality of several among them towards the officers of the staff, as it procured for these all the rewards, introduced discouragement and disgust among the useful officers of the line, who found themselves condemned to vegetate in the most obscure regimental situations. This man, who would yet be an

indifferent sub-lieutenant, has passed over the heads of all his brother-officers, merely because a general thought proper to make him an aid-de-camp. The number of meritorious officers of the line, whose talents are lost to the country for want of encouragement, is absolutely inconceivable. I will frankly avow my wish, that no one was permitted to hold a staff situation, except after a service of several successive years in the line. It is there that the science of governing men is to be learnt; it is there that an officer will acquire just conceptions of war.

The remarks furnished by heads of departments, or by the boards of administration, have the same character of partiality, as the reports of the generals. That tone of frankness and candour, which distinguishes military men, has induced many to suppose that envy found no place in their bosoms; but, in this respect, they bear too close a resemblance to the rest of mankind. Not fewer jealousies and petty intrigues exist in the staff of a regiment than are to be found in a consistory of cardinals, in a chapter of monks.

The essential point is to find a disinterested tribunal. Passions, nevertheless, must always

exist; the aim of the politician should be, not to smother, but to direct them to a useful end. *

* Passions, Fenelon somewhere observes, are the winds which fill the sail of the ship of state; they sometimes overset it, but without them it would remain immoveable and inert.

CHAPTER XLI.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

LET it not be imagined that I wish to check the flight of genius, or to confine military studies to the obscure science of details. Such an attempt is so opposite to my intentions, that if I were charged with the examination of an officer, I would readily excuse a little ignorance in this respect, if I discovered in him the seeds of talent, a sound judgment, and just conceptions of the true end of his profession. This indulgence may be extended, without inconvenience, to whatever is minute and of no weight. I cannot, without difficulty, refrain from indulging a feeling of compassion, when I find Louis XIV. and Louvois disputing on the manner of posting a sentinel, and the

king and his minister pouting like two children on this grave account. I know one man who would readily have conceded to the haughty antagonist of Turenne the honour of understanding such details better than himself.

It is not the Hero of France who has had occasion to ascertain the justice of this observation. When he set out on his expedition to Egypt, he left behind a multitude of incipient reputations; alas! the sequel re-plunged into oblivion the greater part of the names which owed to him a short-lived celebrity.

CHAPTER XLII.

OF THE EFFECT OF ENCOMIUMS.

*"Tel brille au second rang qui s'éclipse au premier."**

NO man more than the Hero of France has had occasion to ascertain the justice of this observation. When he set out on his expedition to Egypt, he left behind a multitude of incipient reputations; alas! the sequel re-plunged into oblivion the greater part of the names which owed to him a short-lived celebrity.

Bonaparte has committed a fault extremely rare, and which I dare scarcely term so, that

* The man who shines in a secondary, sometimes becomes eclipsed in a leading, station.

of praising others to excess. Nothing, certainly, was more calculated to establish his own superiority; but, among a people so disposed to exaggeration, it would, perhaps, have been better to have fallen short of an exact appreciation than to have exceeded it. It is to be supposed, that experience and reflection will allay the extreme desire, this need, as it were, of esteeming others, which is a characteristic of great minds.

It must be admitted, that the sacrifices which the profession of arms requires, on the part of those who embrace it, is only to be compensated by glory, distinctions, and public consideration. Strong minds hunger after reputation, and nothing but the hope of immortalizing his name can induce man to rush on certain death. Alexander, who despised the weakness of those Greeks, formerly so great, then so degenerate, yet coveted their applause; and, while he triumphed on the Granicus, at Issus, at Arbela, on the banks of the Araspes, and in the regions watered by the Indus, he kept his regards incessantly fixed on the public place at Athens.* He enriched with his tro-

* Frederick, an elegant author has observed, wished to be praised by the French as Alexander by the Athenians.

phies that metropolis of arts and eloquence, with a view to receive in exchange some grains of that incense which forms the aliment of gods and heroes. Highly exalted above Achilles by the extent of genius, he yet envied the fortune of that impetuous hero of the Iliad, in having caused the most sublime lyre, ever struck by human hand, to resound with his exploits.

Praise, above all, when it flows from the lips of a great man, is doubtless the most powerful incitement to virtue: excess, in this case, is infinitely preferable to the opposite extreme. Can there be aught more discouraging than those reports, avaricious of praise and written without animation, in which military men anticipate the ingratitude of their cotemporaries and the utter oblivion of posterity?

It is not the less true, that a certain reserve must be practised in the distribution of praises. If the draught is too strong, or ill administered, it intoxicates, and the man lately so modest and so diffident, that he thought himself scarcely worthy of his situation, at once deems it far inferior to his deserts. Pride, ambition, have taken possession of his soul, and the statesman, who intended to oblige him, wonders at his ingratitude and his discontent. Happy,

withal, if the excesses arising from the passions which he has lighted up, do not force him to punish the man in whom he expected to find a friend.

CHAPTER XLIII.

OF DRESS.

THE uniform at present in use has the great disadvantage of affording no mark by which it may be discovered to what corps a soldier belongs; this purpose was formerly answered by the difference of facings and trimmings: not only were the officers and soldiers of each regiment to be thus recognized, but, by means of their tufts, soldiers of the same company.

The advantages of these distinctive marks are obvious;* they become a rallying point to

* Obvious, indeed; and it is surprising that they should so long have remained unappreciated by a government, whose attention must be attentively directed to military improvements. As these salutary distinctions exist in our service, and

the soldiery, and afford to the chiefs the facility of ascertaining, at the first glance, to what corps those who are surprised in fault belong.

This man runs away in the hope of escaping undiscovered, who would not dare to do so, if he were sure of being recognized.

the observations of the author consequently become superfluous, the extreme brevity of this chapter alone withheld me from suppressing it. — TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER XLIV.

OF CAVALRY.*

GUIBERT has said, and Machiavel had said long before, that cavalry, far from being the chief foundation of an army, was, in truth,

* I have not set apart a chapter for the infantry, as I conceive that I have already sufficiently proved its superiority over every other description of troops. I will content myself with saying, that it is desirable that the infantry-soldiers should be provided with defensive arms against cavalry, were it only to familiarize them with the expectation of engaging it. The bayonet would be an excellent offensive weapon if it were longer: the head of the Roman javelin was about twenty-one inches, but it was successively shortened in proportion as the cavalry became augmented; and, when infantry ceased to be considered of importance, it was reduced to nine inches.

only an accessory; that it was not, like the infantry, able to act at all times, but that it might prove of great utility in rendering an advantage complete, in reconnoitring a country, in harassing an enemy, in intercepting convoys, and in masking great movements. I will add, that, it may also be employed with great advantage after a defeat, in moments when the enemy, intoxicated with victory, relaxes from his wonted vigilance. A movement of cavalry may, under such circumstances, throw the victorious troops into disorder and produce most extraordinary effects. Hence, then, it follows, that, without cavalry, the conformation of an army would be imperfect; but I imagine that the attention should be directed to obtain a good, rather than a numerous, cavalry: above all, that infantry should never be sacrificed for its expensive support, and that it would be ridiculous to make the fate of wars dependent on means which are only eventual.

In the time of the republic, the Romans had very little cavalry,* and even under the first emperors it formed only an eighth part of the

* In the legions, the cavalry was to the infantry in the proportion of one to eleven.

legion;* that wise people for a long time placed its whole confidence in infantry, and certainly it had no cause to repent having done so. The men of the rustic tribes, who composed the flower of the people, all entered into the infantry, those of the town were specially reserved for the cavalry. Xenophon informs us,† that, at Sparta, the distinction was carried still farther, and that only those were enrolled in the cavalry, who were suspected to be deficient in vigour or in zeal.

How, in effect, could the Romans refuse pre-eminence to infantry; they who had so often experienced its superiority? In their combat with the Latins, near the Lake Regillus, they succeeded in recovering the day, only by causing their cavalry to dismount, a measure which was often put in practice subsequently, and always with the same success, if we except the battle of Cannæ, where the defeat of the Romans was owing to other causes. In the war against Tigranes, Lucullus defeated one hun-

* See Vegetius, *De Re Militari*, lib. 2, cap. 1, 4, 5, 6. The strength of the legion was six thousand one hundred infantry and seven hundred and twenty-six horsemen.

† In his history of Greece, sixth book.

dred and fifty thousand horse, with an army of thirty thousand men; in fine, the Numidian cavalry, the more formidable as it appeared only to strike, and instantly afterwards became invisible, astonished the Romans but once.*

It has been judiciously observed, that the perfection to which the art of fortification has been carried, and the distinguished part which fortresses play in modern warfare, should have contributed to render cavalry, which is of no use in sieges, less numerous, and surprise is with reason expressed, that the reverse should have taken place.

From the very commencement of his career, Frederick had striking examples of the resources to be drawn from a good infantry: at Molwitz and Czaslaw, which were his first battles, the Prussian cavalry was at the first outset broken and thrown into disorder; the firmness of the infantry re-established every thing and snatched the victory out of the hands of the Austrians;

* The author should, in candour, have added, that the Romans were less successful against the Parthian cavalry, which long continued to be the dread of their legions, and opposed the first effectual barrier to the progress of their conquests. — TRANSLATOR.

nevertheless, this prince always maintained a great number of cavalry. This arm has a more inviting aspect than infantry, it carries with it an air of grandeur; its concomitants announce more power. To this exterior pomp may be attributed the predilection generally entertained for it, a predilection which even we appear to be acquiring.

The Austrian cavalry is incontestibly the most numerous, and I will venture to say, the best in Europe. I cannot discover what important services it rendered during the late war.

The French cavalry has at no period enjoyed a very high reputation, and it was almost entirely disorganized by the effects of the revolution. The Austrians, the Prussians, the English, the Spaniards, nay, the Neapolitans, possessed a cavalry relatively superior to ours. We have vanquished all those nations. The most excellent cavalry in the world, the Mamelukes, were compelled to resign Egypt to us.* I shall

* The author might, with great cogency, have adverted to the campaign carried on in that country, between the British and the French, as a striking proof that a gallant infantry, even when wholly unsupported by cavalry, may triumph over an opponent who has both descriptions of force at his disposal, and that too in a country peculiarly adapted to the operation of

revert, then, to what I have said in the beginning of this chapter, that it is desirable, that it is necessary, to have cavalry, but that the hope of success should be founded only on the excellence of the infantry. We will say more, the nation which possesses the best infantry will, in time, overcome every other.

The quality most essential in a horseman is address in the management of his horse; and, as this requires a suppleness and dexterity, which are not to be acquired after a certain age, it would, perhaps, be right to enrol in the cavalry only young men, and in this respect to deviate, in some degree, from the provisions of the law of conscription.

the arm which that opponent exclusively possesses. On the other hand, it might have been just to mention, that, at the affair of Cateau, in Flanders, the British cavalry overthrew, cut to pieces, or dispersed a body of French infantry, six times as numerous as themselves. But instances of this nature might have caused the Parisian public to doubt the right of inserting the *British*, in the author's pompous list of *vanquished nations*.

— TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER XLV.

OF ARTILLERY.

THERE was a time when artillery was considered as forming the principal strength of an army; that time is passed. Cannon lost its importance, in proportion as the science of evolution was improved.

Formerly armies dragged along in their train a quantity of long culverins and pieces of very heavy calibre; the weight of these guns, of their wheels, of their carriages, was excessive, and rendered them extremely embarrassing. The Swedes were the first who mingled light cannon in their line. This innovation was adopted by the king of Prussia in 1741, and his example was promptly imitated by the Austrians and by the French; but the artillery composing the park still continued to be extremely weighty. The court of France recalled from Austria M. de Gribeauval, and to his

labours we owe, in a great measure, the perfection to which artillery has been carried. The windage of the pieces was made less, which produced greater precision in the firing, diminished the recoil and encreased the range; but the most important improvement was a reduction in the weight of the pieces and their carriages. A four-pounder with its carriage weighed eight hundred pounds less than it had done formerly; so that the cannon acquired sufficient mobility to follow all the evolutions of a regiment of infantry. About the same time a uniformity of bore was introduced among the muskets of the infantry, a uniformity most necessary, but which, however inconceivable it may appear, had never previously existed. At length, the Prussians created horse-artillery, which was the more readily introduced among us, as it is in unison with our national impetuosity. It is, at present, almost the only artillery used in the field with advantage. In the late war, very little artillery has been used; we had very little with our armies, and the Austrians, who followed us very closely in all useful innovations, have not employed much more.*

* Except at Marengo. I have known officers, who, on their return from that battle, appeared astonished at the effects

Artillery is really formidable, only where troops are placed in one of those rare positions in which it is impossible to close with an enemy. The report of cannon always causes affright to recruits, but old soldiers care little about it. Our mode of attack, at present, is to cause our columns to be preceded by clouds of light troops, who, marching unconnectedly, neutralize the effects of artillery, and reach the batteries before they have had time to do any harm. † A bullet ‡ may certainly carry off some

of the Austrian cannon : but, if it is recollected, that, during the greater part of the day, two divisions of the French army, (those of Lannes and Victor,) remained immoveable in their positions, waiting for the arrival of other troops, it will be admitted that this instance cannot fairly be drawn into example, and should be considered in the light of the exceptions which I have pointed out.

* To this impetuosity of attack, it is owing that battles are less murderous than they were formerly ; but, if fewer men are slain, more prisoners are taken.

A battery which does not command every thing within eight hundred paces is ill placed : the range of grape shot is eight hundred paces ; is it conceivable that cannon, loaded with grape, can fire twelve rounds on a cloud of sharp shooters without doing any harm ? — Marginal note by General Jarry.

† In action, round shot is not to be taken into account ; the principal effect of artillery consists in grape. — Marginal note by General Jarry.

men, but even that does not always happen; and what are a few men to an army? The weapon which is really deadly is the firelock, and even that yields to the bayonet.

The attack and defence of fortified places is the true province of artillery; I may be mistaken, but I think that the time will come when that shall be its only destination.*

* Error upon error. — Marginal note by General Jarry.

CHAPTER XLVI.

DEDUCTION FROM THE TWO PRECEDING
CHAPTERS. *

I HAVE already observed, that there cannot be a stronger proof of the decay of military

* After several excellent reflections, it is lamentable to read that cavalry and artillery are of no use in action and might be dispensed with. Those clouds of light troops which march unconnectedly in a plain would be put to flight and trampled down by a single squadron.

If M. Latrille had made three campaigns in Hanover, with different generals, he would have a different opinion of the powers of cavalry.

Thus it is that the events of a single war, in a single country, are made to form the basis of a theory intended to be universally applied. The operations of war are provisional and contingent: there is nothing fixed but the nature of the seat of

spirit among a people than the importance which it attaches to cavalry, to warlike engines, and generally to all means independent of personal courage.

The elephants of Asia were of no avail opposed to the valour of Macedon and Rome; and, by a simple evolution, Sylla succeeded in rendering nugatory the effects of the chariots armed with scythes, with which Archelaus assailed him.

action, the rest is fugitive and can never be drawn into example. — Marginal note by General Jarry.

The author and the commentator are both before the public, but I cannot refrain from observing, that the text does not warrant that latitude of opinion which is attributed to the author on the subject of cavalry and artillery. Can those means be called useless, which enable a general to render an advantage complete, to reconnoitre a country, to harass an enemy, to intercept convoys, and to mask great movements; nay, on some occasions, to convert defeat into victory? yet these properties does the author assign to cavalry. If he has a less favourable opinion of foot-artillery, it may have been occasioned by the disuse into which, if we are to believe his narrative, it was allowed to fall by the first generals of the day. The country, which appears to have been the principal scene of the author's military labours, presents every description of topography, and the province of Hanover itself does not contain a plain more extensive than that in which the fate of Italy was finally determined, the plain of Marengo. — TRANSLATOR.

The Greek fire, of which they were exclusively possessed, persuaded the eastern emperors that they were invincible; they allowed their subjects to become enervated, and a horde of barbarians, disgorged by the marshes of Scythia, overturned their empire.

In a word, substitutes may be found in war for every thing, except for courage, for good order, and for talent.

CHAPTER XLVII.

OF STRONG PLACES.

THE utility of fortified places is incontestable; they arrest the progress of an army, or, at least, oblige it to divide its force, and it is certain that no solid footing can be obtained in a country without the possession of its fortresses. Nevertheless, the best fortresses do not prevent an invasion; and, when it is recollected that the three places which have played the most distinguished part during the last war, Mantua, Mentz, Ehrenbreistein, have been deemed imperfect after inspection, we are at a loss what to think of the resources to be derived from the art of fortification.

Mentz certainly made a fine defence against the Prussians, but it may be questionable whether the twenty-five or thirty thousand men,

who were shut up within its walls, would not have been more useful in the field.

If Mantua resisted during ten months, it was because, after the battle of Castiglione, the siege was converted into a blockade, and a singular circumstance attending the blockade is, that the troops charged with carrying it on were always less numerous than those of the garrison, so that, in this sense, the place was of greater inconvenience to the Austrian than to the French army.

For my part, I am fully persuaded that the principal merit of a place consists in its situation, but that even this advantage, with all those which art can procure, is of no use when the defence is ill conducted, and to a good defence a well formed army and able officers are indispensably necessary.* These form the

* Did not the wretched Fort of Kehl make a defence more long and infinitely more brilliant than the greater part of the fortresses of the first rank.

Did not a handful of Britons, under the conduct of a gallant knight, render abortive the most-desperate attempts of a general and a veteran army, until then uniformly successful, to possess themselves of a place, surrounded only by an antique wall, and to the capture of which a battalion and two pieces of artillery would have been deemed fully adequate?

pivot on which all military operations must turn. We have penetrated into, and maintained ourselves in, Italy, in spite of its strong places, and in spite of them have we been driven out of that country: the same thing has happened in the neighbourhood of the Rhine. It does not, then, admit of doubt, and the event of almost all wars confirm the assertion, that, although strong places may retard, they can never prevent, the conquest of a country, by an enemy who shall have a decided superiority in the field.* Frederick William has been charged with imprudently advancing into the heart of France, without previously securing the strong places. I, on the contrary, think, that, if the Austrians, whose views were less upright, had followed his example, in lieu of

This, however, was less the triumph of superior skill than that of superior valour.

The gallant inhabitants of Saragossa, in a city utterly unprovided with fortified works and open to every inroad, arrested, for several weeks, the utmost efforts of a veteran army, and opposed a more formidable barrier to the progress of French power than all the northern provinces of Spain taken together.

—TRANSLATOR.

* Was not the battle of Marengo alone worth twelve sieges?

occupying themselves with the conquest of Flanders, the war might have assumed a very different appearance. Considerable abilities, indeed, are requisite to conduct an enterprize of this nature, and it is doubtful whether the prince in question possessed those abilities. Moreover, there are few examples of invasion having succeeded when undertaken by combined powers; for there, especially, is required that unity of action and of will which cause all the component parts of an army to concur to one end, which not only contributes to afford to successes all the extension of which they are susceptible, but withal affords resources under the greatest reverses. It would be unjust, then, to adduce this example in contradiction to my maxims. While I have in view one hypothesis, I must not be made to reason on another.

Lloyd and the best military writers have thought that it was impossible that an invasion of France could meet with success; but they have, at the same time, declared, that France rather owed this advantage to her position between seas and mountains, the compactness of her territory, the number and courage of her inhabitants, than to her fortresses. Coehorn

covered Holland with them, but they have not preserved her from our brigades.*

It must not be hence inferred, that I would have the nation demolish its citadels, dismantle its towers, and renounce all the advantages to be derived from a science in several respects useful. No, my only design has been to correct that disposition which men have to found their security wholly on so frail a foundation. Far from wishing to put a stop to the study of fortification, I wish that it were rendered familiar to every military man who is destined for command. It is, in effect, matter of keen regret, that with us the military art is divided into branches almost wholly foreign to each other. It was not so with the ancients; Cæsar himself superintended the sieges which his troops undertook; and, when the warlike machines then in use proved insufficient, he invented others.† He was at

* Though Coehorn strengthened and made additions to the works of some fortresses already existing, he constructed no new ones. — Marginal note by General Jarry.

† It may be seen, in his commentaries, with what complacency he dwells on all that he has done in this way. He well knew that he must universally be regarded as a great general, he wished to acquire, in addition, the reputation of

once the Turenne and the Vauban of his day. Why should we not equally attempt as much? A great example is before us; a general from the school of the artillery has displayed the most transcendant talent for the war of evolution. Twenty years since it would not have been thought possible; shall such an example be thrown away?

an able engineer. The same reason made Frederick, who was not jealous of Laudon, jealous of Voltaire.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

OF THE MARINE, CONSIDERED WITH RELATION TO CONTINENTAL WARFARE.

HAS the decay of our marine been favourable or prejudicial to the result of the late war? Without pronouncing on a question of such importance, I will offer some doubts, confident that, through the errors into which I may fall, the reader will discern the sentiments of a citizen, whose first idol is the glory of his country.

It is only since the discovery of America and the passage into India round the Cape of Good Hope that the marine has acquired in Europe a great degree of importance. In throwing open the whole world, the compass presented to ambition a new stage on which all nations wished to play a leading part. The

Portuguese, the Spaniards, the Dutch, were the first who made a distinguished figure on it, and they alternately possessed the empire of the sea, that source of national wealth. But these people, like the French under Louis XIV. wished at the same time to maintain a preponderating influence on the continent; they have fallen under this double burden. Hitherto, England has had the wisdom to concentrate its strength on one element; she reigns on it without a rival.

The first days of the revolution witnessed the dissolution of such little part of our navy as yet remained to us: without hope of being able to restore it, all our efforts were directed to the war on the continent: our success has been prodigious. We have triumphed over the whole of confederated Europe. England in vain paraded her squadrons on the two seas; she was forced to consent to peace as soon as the emperor became unable to prosecute war.

Let us suppose that our marine had been in sufficiently good order to excite in us a desire of contending with the maritime powers, at the time when we had so many enemies on our hands, we should certainly have exhausted ourselves very shortly, and we should infallibly have been vanquished on both elements. If,

moreover, the attention be directed to the immense preparations, the double consumption of men, of provisions, of stores of all sorts, and the enormous expense necessary to maintain a navy; it must be admitted, that in the very outset we should have experienced the inadequacy of our means.

If, then, it be true that France will never be able to raise her marine to a level with that of England without exposing herself to fall into a rank *below* her neighbours, and that, consequently, it is impossible to preserve her commerce from being oppressed by Great Britain in the event of war, should she not spare the expenses of a diversion of which the ill effects are incontestible, since its very successes must in the end be productive of a fatal result. She will not be able to wound her rival in her colonies of Asia and America, but she will always have it in her power to interdict to that rival the entrance of her *colonies of Europe*,* and these wounds will be not less sensible nor

* Is not, in fact, all Europe tributary to England? Her empire is the more firmly established as it is founded on the thoughtlessness and indolence of the continental governments, which, when they have nothing else to offer in exchange for her gold, barter the blood of their subjects.

less fatal. What! it may be exclaimed, will you cede to the English the uncontroled dominion of the sea? certainly not, I only mean to maintain, that the only means of counter-acting her influence is to preserve our continental superiority. Let us allow a free course to the hand of time, and to the infatuated arrogance of these islanders. When Hanno imperiously declared, in the negotiation which followed the first Punic war, that he would not allow the Romans even to wash their hands in the seas of Sicily, Hanno pronounced the death-warrant of his country.

For the consolation of those nations which are deprived of a marine, let it be recollected, that if naval preponderance produces sudden and extraordinary splendour, that splendour is commonly of short duration; Tyre fell beneath the efforts of the Macedonian phalanx; the legions of Rome levelled Carthage with the dust; Athens received the yoke of Lacedemon. Venice, Genoa, Pisa, have played for a short time a distinguished part, and have then fallen never to rise again. Portugal, Holland, offer but the shadow of what they have been. Spain, which under Charles V. menaced all Europe with subjection, could never succeed in repairing the breaches which the attempts of Philip II.

to obtain the trident of the seas made in the fabric of her power; and the same folly eagerly adopted by Louis XIV. is, perhaps, the true cause of the humiliation and feebleness of France during the two last reigns.

It is, then, in the wreck of time that England should read its destiny; like all the nations which have preceded her in the dominion of the seas she has abused her prosperity, and like them, too, a just retribution awaits her.*

* I leave it to abler pens to comment at length on the subject of this chapter; but I must be allowed to observe, that all the states, which are drawn into example by the author, lost their political preponderance only *after* they had lost their maritime superiority, which proves, if it can be made to prove any thing, that maritime superiority ensures, while it lasts, political preponderance. In point of fact, did not the Romans very early feel, that, to make an impression on Carthage, it was necessary to create a superior naval power? To the Romans we owe the often quoted maxim, "*Qui mare teneat, eum necesse verum potiri?*"—TRANSLATOR.

CHAPTER XLIX.

OF THE INFLUENCE OF SOME MORAL CAUSES.

THE love of liberty and their country created the art of war among the Greeks, and the world knows the great things which they achieved. The Arabs, in Asia, and the rugged sectaries of Odin, in Europe, became conquerors from a spirit of fanaticism. The Romans, rather superstitious than fanatical, owed their victories as much to religious feelings as to military institutions. The eagles of the legions, which Tacitus calls *bellorum deos*, were the most hallowed objects of the veneration of the soldiery; it was not only infamous but sacrilegious to abandon them. The augurs always moved in the train of the army, and the generals took care never to act without assuring themselves of the suffrages of the Gods; seve-

eral among them were sufficiently bold to feign inspiration.* In Livy we shall find innumerable instances of the power with which religion operated on the minds of the Romans. The Patricians were so well aware of its importance, that they exerted all their efforts to retain it in their own hands. They admitted the people to a participation of supreme power, but would never permit any, not of their own body, to hold the censer; this exclusive privilege long maintained an equilibrium and set bounds to the authority of the tribunes.

The ability with which a modern power† avails itself of the religious enthusiasm of its subjects is universally known: while patriotism and honour render the French capable of every virtue. It is for those who govern to take advantage of these exalted motives, and to heighten or moderate, according to their views, the passions to which they give birth. Thus, the experienced navigator spreads all that can-

* Sylla persuaded his army that he had secret conferences with the oracle of Apollo. Sertorius pretended that he was inspired by a hind.

† Russia.

vass in a calm which he carefully furls when a lowering sky portends an approaching tempest. Alexander assumed the title of son of Jupiter, and he endeavoured to persuade the nations of the east, that he was sent to execute the decrees of heaven. Those who have regarded this trait in his life as the sally of extravagance and pride, have judged of Alexander's conduct rather on the ideas of the present day than on those of the age in which he lived. His object was not to impose on the Greeks, who had, at that time, divested themselves of all religious shackles; no, he wished to subjugate, by the force of opinion, people to whom nature appeared to have rendered it necessary to believe and to adore; he sought to be esteemed a god, in climates where reason has always been subservient to imagination, where the mind has ever been open to impressions of the wonderful and miraculous; in fine, which have been the cradle of all superstitions. Experience must have confirmed the policy of the design of Alexander, since all his successors deemed it necessary to imitate his example: they were all deified after him. Roman proconsuls subsequently obtained in these countries the same honours, and it was thence that the custom of deifying the empe-

rors was introduced at Rome. Several centuries afterwards Mahomet dared to declare himself the interpreter of the Divinity, and those countries which resisted his arms were subjugated by persuasion.

Alexander was neither inspired nor fanatical. Let us hear himself, when condescending to reply to the insulting harangues of Hermolaus, in the presence of the council of the nation, he says: "Do you not wonder at Hermolaus, who would have me oppose the will of Jupiter, whose oracle has called me his son? Can I **controul** the word of the gods? If I **have** received so glorious an appellation, was it not with a view to add weight to your arms? Would to the gods that the Indians were convinced of its truth! they would hasten to acknowledge you for their masters."

CHAPTER L.

OF CONQUESTS.

“ I AM reproached,” continued Alexander, “ with bestowing honours and appointments on the Persians whom I have subdued. Strange effect of prejudice! What is there in this which is not strictly conformable to policy and to moderation? Is it not better to render my empire beloved than odious? I came not into Asia to destroy nations and to desolate this half of the universe! no, I wish to obtain the love of its people, and to draw down blessings on my successes. The love of the Persians, O Macedonians! is the firmest stay on which your authority can rest. Do you suppose, that, if I rendered them unhappy, they would crowd forward to mingle in your ranks as they do, and consent to shed their blood to save yours?

I am reproached with not having introduced the simplicity of a Grecian king on the throne of Persia, a measure which would have reduced my personal influence and rendered my power contemptible.* The customs of a mighty empire are not to be changed in a day; let us adopt those which are worthy of imitation; let us introduce, without violence, our own habits; but, above all, let us soften the rigour of servitude by the mildness of our laws.†

What a display of the wisdom and depth of the views of this great man! It is really only thus that power is to be consolidated and that a conquered people is to be governed. In these few words, Alexander traced the code by which all conquerors should be regulated.

* The Parthians could not endure that king, who, having been educated at Rome, rendered himself familiar and accessible to all his subjects.

† Alexander probably found as much difficulty in prevailing on the Greeks to adopt the customs of the Persians as Cortez would have experienced to induce the Spaniards to like those of the Mexicans. The contempt entertained for the vanquished was equal in both instances. Indeed, had not the people, first mentioned, condemned an unfortunate to death for translating into Greek the words of a Barbarian? The hatred which they cherished against the Persians was reflected on their benefactor; his history would otherwise have descended to us less disfigured than it is.

If the Romans, the greatest extortioners which ever the world saw, succeeded in maintaining themselves every where, it was because they announced themselves less as conquerors than as protectors or allies. They professed to take up arms only to avenge the oppressed or to punish the unjust, so that their authority, as it appeared less humiliating, became, in effect, more generally and more firmly established, than if they had, in the first instance, spoken the language of masters.

They did not themselves occupy the countries which they had subjugated, as that would have weakened their forces too considerably; they entrusted them to kings or governors of their selection, to whom their alliance was so necessary as to become a pledge of their fidelity.

They moreover carefully entertained the seeds of division in those distant states, that, if one of their allies sought to throw off the yoke, they might have sure means of embroiling him with his neighbours and of providing a more docile successor.

The policy of Rome had withal this advantage; that, though it exacted heavy tributes from the kings who were under its protection, it profited of the spoils of the nation without becoming odious to it, for the hand of Rome

never appeared, except to depose or punish the kings.

It was thus that they lulled the suspicions of every people; not only was there never a comprehensive league formed against them, but the states which they had reduced almost invariably aided them in the subjugation of their neighbours.

But this system, which was admirably adapted to extend their conquests, ceased to be excellent when those conquests became completed. ~~Having no longer any opposition to fear,~~ they divided the world into great fractions, which they placed under the government of proconsuls: this fault proved the ruin of the commonwealth. It is difficult to conceive how so enlightened a people could have imagined, that men, who, in distant provinces distributed crowns and sceptres, who had it in their power to accumulate vast treasures, to dispose of large armies, to exercise all the acts of sovereignty, would accustom themselves to return to Rome, there to be confounded in the crowd, and to cabal for the suffrages of a multitude which they despised, and which they had it in their power to enslave.

The Romans have been reproached with having conferred the right of citizenship with

too prodigal a hand; I, on the contrary, think that they were too sparing of it. If all the conquered nations had been successively called to the enjoyment of this privilege,* and if, at the same time, a division of territory had been adopted, similar to that which now exists in France, it had never been in the power of an individual to kindle civil wars, and yet less to forge fetters for his country. All the members of that gigantic confederation had contracted an adherence which would have transferred them into Romans; as it was, these different nations, although united under one common yoke, did not the less continue to be Gauls, Spaniards, Syrians, Pannonians, Illyrians, Barbarians, and they naturally viewed with indifference revolutions which produced only a change in their masters, not a change in their destiny.

The Romans never failed to send into the conquered provinces numerous colonies. These

* To this end it would have been necessary to alter the constitution and to introduce the representative system. The laws which had sufficed to the government of the thirty-five tribes were not calculated for a vast empire. Venice treated its continental possessions nearly in the same manner that Rome treated the conquered countries. Had Venice ever aggrandized herself as much as Rome, she would have ended like her in spite of her state inquisition.

means might be good, but they were insufficient; it may even be concluded that these colonists formed a privileged class,* and that their independence and their immunities but rendered the condition of the vanquished more insupportable,

Heaven forbid that the wish, mad as it would be inhuman, of seeing the French become a nation of conquerors, should ever find admittance into my bosom; but I may be permitted to say, that the use which she has made of her victories, the mildness † with which she has treated the inhabitants, the generosity with which she has allowed them to participate in

* This is not an idle supposition; a Roman citizen every where preserved the right of being judged only by the Roman people, which effectually shielded him from the arbitrary power of a proconsul or of a proprætor.

† It would be difficult to say where this mildness has been exemplified. It is notorious, that, however the revolutionary principles which long pervaded the greater part of Europe, might have led the inhabitants of the countries, which have successively fallen a prey to the French arms, to desire and to welcome the appearance of their invaders, they soon ceased to regard them with any other feelings than those of detestation. Latrille, himself, enumerates, among the most formidable difficulties with which Bonaparte had to contend, the hostile disposition of the people of Italy. — TRANSLATOR:

the rights of citizenship, appear to me to appertain to a system of policy, more liberal, more wise, more enlightened, than that pursued by the Romans.

THE END.

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